A MODERN CAMPAIGN

OR WAR AND WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY IN THE FAR EAST

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A MODERN CAMPAIGN

WITH KUROKI IN MANCHURIA

BY

FREDERICK PALMER

With Twenty Illustrations and Three Maps.
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A
MODERN CAMPAIGN

OR WAR AND WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY IN THE FAR EAST

BY

DAVID FRASER

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT TO "THE TIMES"

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS AND FOUR MAPS

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TO

L. AND M. J.

PREFACE

THE descriptions of fighting, which appear in this volume, were all written a few days after each battle, while events were fresh in my mind. I have since carefully read official reports from both sides, and also some accounts that were not official, without finding anything to suggest that what I had already written was incorrect. Until a military history of the war is compiled, perhaps my version of the fighting with General Kuroki will be acceptable as being the narrative of an eye-witness.

The chapter on artillery was written before the Government decided to re-arm, and has been left in the book to show how, in respect to artillery, the country has been served by those responsible for its armament, and how we stand in relation to foreign Powers until the new guns are provided.

D. F.

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A MODERN CAMPAIGN

CHAPTER I

FROM YOKOHAMA TO WEIHAIWEI

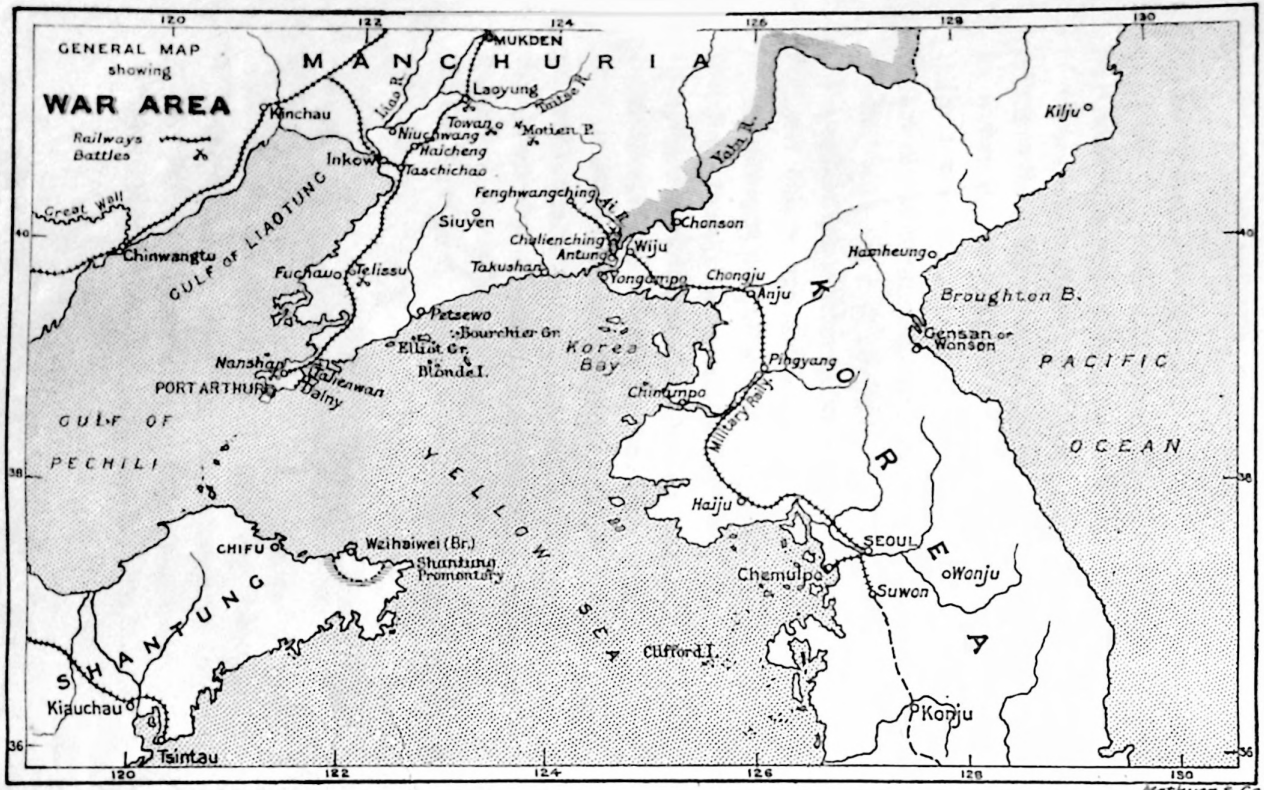
NEARING Yokohama towards the end of January, 1904, the passengers on the good ship *Siberia* were greatly exercised in their minds on the subject of the relations between Russia and Japan. Our last port of call had been Honolulu, where all the latest news pointed to the probability of an early declaration of war. Now we were nearing the Japanese coast, and soon to know what had happened during the twelve days which had elapsed since our departure from the Sandwich Islands. On board we were divided into three parties. Numerically the strongest of these was the one, including all the ladies and all the ship's officers, that believed war already declared, and boarding by a Russian man of war an imminent danger. The second party, composed of serious business men and globe trotters, thought things could hardly yet have

passed beyond the diplomatic stage. Party three, of which I was an humble member, consisted of nine newspaper men, all spouting Jingoes, but all of whom were in the lowest depths of pessimism in regard to the prospects of war—for how is it possible for a man to voyage to the other side of the world, and find that which he came to see? Such an inversion of the natural contrariness of things defied expectation.

We sighted land without encountering the Russian fleet, nor did we find Yokohama in ruins. Hardly had we dropped anchor in the Bay when we heard that the Japanese Government had taken over as transports the vessels of an important shipping line. A step of this sort indicated serious preparation for war. It behoved those who meant to follow the impending conflict to put their houses in order. When the *Siberia* left Yokohama, a few hours later, to proceed on her voyage along the Japanese coast, I remained on board. In my pocket was a cable from New York—

> "*Shantung Promontory best erect mast 180 feet high 30 feet from water's edge De Forest.*"

Of wireless telegraphy and all that pertained to it I was completely ignorant. My orders were to proceed to Shantung and there prepare for the plant and operators which were coming from America.


GENERAL MAP
showing
WAR AREA
Railways
Battles
MANCHURIA
MUKDEN
Laoyung
Liao R.
Taitse R.
Kinchau
Towan
Motien P.
Niuchwang
Haicheng
Inkow
Taschichao
Yalu R.
Kilju
Great Wall
Chinwangtu
GULF OF LIAOTUNG
Fenghwangching
Ai R.
Siuyen
Chonson
Chulienching
Antung
Wiju
Takushan
Yongampo
Chongju
Anju
Hamheung
Fuchau
Telissu
Petsewo
Bourchier Gr.
Elliot Gr.
Blonde I.
Korea Bay
Broughton B.
Gensan or Wonson
Nanshan
Talienwan
Dalny
PORT ARTHUR
Pingyang
Chinampo
Military Rally
PACIFIC
OCEAN
GULF OF
PECHILI
YELLOW SEA
KOREA
Haiju
SEOUL
CHIFU
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Chemulpo
Wonju
Suwon
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Methuen & Co.

Where to establish the station, I had to decide; and how to place so mighty a mast, the cable told. But how to get the thing to stand up, how to procure the materials, where to find lunatics mad enough to climb the mast when it was up, were problems which refused to solve themselves. It was with a heavy heart that I watched the vast, white-capped bulk of Fujiyama, Japan's sacred mountain, recede into the distance.

Yet the project was an attractive one. A war between Russia and Japan, if the latter elected to close the negotiations and fight, must needs be conducted in Korea and the southern provinces of Manchuria. And with the Russian naval base at Port Arthur it was inevitable that the Japanese fleet must operate in the waters around the Laotung Peninsula, and hold the Russian ships at bay whilst troops were being transported across the Korean Strait. Thus, not only would the naval fighting be enclosed within the limited area of the Gulf of Pechili and the Yellow Sea, but the land fighting could never be any great distance beyond the eastern and northern littoral of these waters.

So convinced was *The Times* of the inevitability of the course of events that it was prepared to venture heavy expenditure on a plan which depended for success upon this view proving correct. The plan consisted of the establishment of a wireless

telegraphy station on the Shantung coast, at a point in easy communication with a European cable office; and the chartering of a speedy steamboat, fitted with wireless telegraphy, which should cruise the seas and coastline referred to and keep the land station advised of the latest naval and military developments. War appearing imminent, I was now on my way to choose a suitable point for our station, and to erect the sky-scraping mast essential to wireless telegraphy, so that on the arrival of the plant there would be no delay in the installation of the instruments.

Shantung suggested missionary-eating natives and other vague horrors. The little red dot on the map, not far from the Promontory, was obviously the place upon which to base operations. Weihaiwei, then, was my immediate destination. How to reach this most northerly of our Eastern possessions was somewhat of a problem, for I was informed on the *Siberia* that Weihaiwei* was ice-bound until March, and that ships sailing for ports in these seas passed it by in winter time. A Japanese line ran small passenger boats from Nagasaki to Chefoo *viâ* the Korean coast. Chefoo, on the map, looked like fifty miles distant from Weihaiwei, and I calculated that once there I could, at least, walk the intervening distance. The Nippon Yusen Kaisha boats, however, were all being

* Weihaiwei is ice-free all the year round.

requisitioned by the Japanese Government, which set advertised sailings at naught.

In much doubt, then, I continued my voyage through that most wonderful of regions, the Inland Sea of Japan. We touched at Kobe, where I obtained a passing glimpse of daintinesses in kimonas, that made one wishful to tarry by the way. Then at Moji there came a sudden wrench. I had to bid farewell to the *Siberia* in the dead of night and rush for the railway station to catch a train for Nagasaki. Otherwise I would miss the *Santu Maru* leaving for Fusan, Chemulpo, and Chefoo on the following morning. Bag and baggage I was bundled out of the great ship that had been home to me for many long days. Her black hull and twinkling lights grew smaller and smaller as the steam launch crunched through the dark water of the Bay, and soon I lost her amid the ships that crowded the busy roadstead.

On the train there was no sleeping accommodation, but with my own rug, and another lent me by a thoughtful friend, I was able to defy some twenty degrees of frost. Nagasaki was reached in the morning, and I hurried aboard the *Santu Maru*, whose Blue Peter fluttered valiantly in the wind. In the afternoon we steamed out of the most beautiful harbour in the whole world, the *Siberia* still unsignalled, proving that I had done well in making a dash across country, as it turned out that the

Santu Maru was the last passenger boat to leave Japan for Korea for many a long day.

About dusk we sighted a big vessel steaming towards us. It was my friend the *Siberia*. Her bows rose higher and higher out of the water, and then, in the falling night, her outline began to fade. As she came abeam her lights suddenly were lit and she swept by in the glory of a hundred blazing portholes. Dimly I could see her foaming forefoot and the smoke streaming from her funnels. A ship passing in the night—one whose decks I had trod but twenty hours past, whose bows I had watched rearing and plunging into the orange and red of many Pacific sunsets. Yet she passed—without a sign—into the night.

The traveller to Korea by way of Japan usually ships from Nagasaki, and if he has reached that port by traversing Japanese waters from Yokohama he will have grasped one of the fundamental features of the Japanese Empire. From end to end Japan is composed of islands varying from hundreds of miles in length to hundreds of feet, and so numerous that the Government has not yet taken upon itself the task of counting them. The sea, therefore, is not associated in the Japanese mind with the idea of boundary. A strip of water, in their view, is merely a convenient highway for the transport of

commodities, and a pleasant path by which to visit relations in neighbouring isles.

The distance between Nagasaki and Fusan, the nearest Korean port to Japan, is about 170 miles. Outward bound from Nagasaki, the first 70 miles of the steamer's course is completely land-locked, but thereafter the Korean Channel is reached and comparatively open water entered. Yet the strait separating the two countries is very far from fulfilling the usual acceptation of the term. Whilst the English Channel dividing France and England forms a natural and effective barrier against either intimacy or aggression, the Korean Channel is full of islands, each one of which invites the native of Japan proper to extend his trade and increase his possessions. In reality, the sea between the southern end of the Japanese archipelago and the mainland of Korea is so studded with islands that it is only by the aid of maps that the traveller can tell where Japan ends and Korea begins. So much so that were Japan in possession of that part of the Korean coast lying nearest to her own shores she could, with the aid of modern guns, so fortify the Korean Channel that it would become impassable to the ships of an enemy desiring to sail between Korea and Japan. Thus on the Japanese side there exists the natural inducement of proximity to extend and colonise, whilst from the Russian point of view any

such extension of Japanese territory would jeopardise communications between—in fact, isolate, one from the other—Port Arthur and Vladivostok.

The entrance to Fusan is characteristic of Korean harbours. At the time of writing the season is practically mid-winter, and whatever vegetation the Korean hills may boast of in spring and summer, just now they are destitute of verdure. Yet the stunted grass struggling for existence upon the brown wind-swept bluffs and promontories mellows away the harshness of the coastline and likens it somewhat to that of the bracken-clad mountains of the western islands of Scotland after the first glory of autumn has departed from them. Guarding the narrow passage on the right of the entrance there rises out of the water a succession of Titanic pillars of rock amongst which the tide surges, whilst on the left stretches a row of islands which merge into a cape that curls around from south to east and snugly encloses the bay within its sweep.

The population of Fusan numbers about 50,000 souls, of whom 36,000 are Korean and 14,000 Japanese. The Chinese inhabitants number 105, whilst Europeans total 21, of whom six-sevenths are missionaries. There is one Russian firm in Fusan and one American, the remainder consisting of over 200 Japanese and a few Chinese, from which may be deduced the fact that practically all the export and

import trade of Fusan is in Japanese hands. A reference to the shipping returns shows that of 1,742 vessels entered at the port in the year 1902 no fewer than 1,628 flew the Japanese flag. During the same period the imports from Japan were 80 per cent. of the total, leaving 15 per cent. to China,* 5 per cent. to the United States, and the significant proportion of ·3 per cent. to Russian Manchuria. So far as exports are concerned, Japan monopolises them, the returns showing that 96 per cent. of a total export value of 2,607,876 yen (£260,000) was cleared for Japanese ports.

Interesting as are these figures in their bearing upon the relations existing between Japan and Korea, the position of the former as regards local affairs in Fusan does more almost, if that were possible, to accentuate the dominance of Japan's interests in Southern Korea. Side by side in the Bay lie the Japanese town and the Korean city, known collectively as Fusan. The one community is double the size of the other, the city old as the surrounding hills, the town, in comparison, but the product of a day. The townsmen are strangers to the soil, the dwellers in the city trace the marks of their progenitors into forgotten ages. Yet compare the two.

* Of which a considerable portion represents British manufactures transhipped at Shanghai.

The Japanese town is lighted by electricity, served by a telephone system, and supplied with water by works that are as complete and elaborate as any in Europe or America. There are courts, civil offices, newspapers, barracks, and soldiers. In the Bay the Japanese are sinking millions of yen to reclaim 160,000 square mètres of land which is to form a basis for a comprehensive harbour scheme. They are building a broad macadamised road from one end of the town to the other. Finally, Fusan is the terminus of the Seoul-Fusan Railway, an undertaking financed by Japanese capitalists, guaranteed by the Japanese Government, and being built entirely by Japanese engineers.

The Korean part of Fusan is a maze of indescribably filthy lanes, wherein dwell fowls, pigs, ponies, and human beings under common roofs. There is no system of sanitation, no public lighting, no water-supply, and no consciousness amongst the people that any of these things are desirable. Where the Japanese administer justice based on Roman law the Korean Yamên inflicts torture; where the Japanese have established both advanced and elementary education the Koreans are content to remain ignorant, primitive, and unclean. And so on *ad infinitum*. Surely Japan must stay where she has taken root so deeply, where she has vindicated so completely her

ability to establish abroad the civilisation she has adopted at home. It is inconceivable that Russia can prevent her assimilating a country which every natural law proclaims to be her destiny.

Not the least remarkable instance of Japanese ambition in Korea is the railway by which it is designed to connect Fusan with the capital of the country, and in time to extend to the north. Ultimately it is the intention to effect a junction with the Siberian railway beyond the Korean border; but there is little possibility of such a consummation whilst the Far Eastern question remains in its present state.

It is significant of the tendency of American iron to supplement British, in markets where the latter until recently has been supreme, that all the beams and girders for bridges, the wheels for rolling stock, and the locomotives are being imported from the United States, whilst England has to be content with the furnishing of the rails. Japan herself is constructing the cars.

From Fusan the *Santu Maru* steamed round the Korean coast to Chemulpo and cast anchor among a fleet of warships of different nationalities, that, like vultures, seemed to smell the coming conflict. Brave amongst them were the *Variag*, a low, racing-like four-funnelled cruiser, and the bluff-bowed, Swedish-built *Korietz*, both, within seven days, to be targets

for Japanese guns. Besides the two Russians there were British, French, Italian, American, Japanese, and Korean vessels of war, the last-named a white-painted, unprotected, converted tramp, that looked like a woolly sheep beside the tigers that surrounded her.

Landing at Chemulpo I went on to Seoul, a strange city of which I was to see a great deal within the next two months. I then returned to Chemulpo, where, at this time, there was not a symptom of the irruption of Japanese soldiery that took place a few days later. The captain of the *Santu Maru* expected hourly to receive a summons to return to Japan instead of completing his voyage, in which case I should be stranded in Korea. It was, therefore, with some relief that I saw our anchor weighed and a course set for Chefoo.

In due time we reached the oldest of the Treaty Ports in these seas, and for the first time I beheld the China of the imagination, the country that looms so large and mysterious in the mind's eye of the dweller in the West. I was borne ashore in a sampan manned by brown, weazen-faced boatmen, whose physiognomies expressed unquenchable humour and kindliness, and whose manner, when it came to the question of hire-money, lacked none of the commercialism with which the Chinaman is particularly endowed.

I stayed two or three days in Chefoo waiting for a steamer to Weihaiwei—it turned out to be three days' ride by the road—and during that time I made the acquaintance of a wonderful sound.

It came to me first as I was being shaved in a barber's shop. The barber was a Japanese, and when the first wild strains broke upon my ear, I sat up with a jerk that put my jugular in jeopardy, and asked what it was. He did not know enough English to tell. Whatever it was it was approaching. It sounded like ten thousand pigs being killed inside a heavy-lidded box that opened and closed at short and regular intervals. The sound was always present, but alternately muffled and clear, like the baleful lamentation of a steam-blown brass band.

I put my besoaped countenance out of the shop door to look. There was nothing visible except a patriarchal Chinaman straining at an enormous wheelbarrow. The noise came out of every doorway and window in the street, from the heavens above and out of the earth below, the stones spoke it, the walls groaned it, the air screamed it. Only the old Chinaman seemed to have no part in it. He came slowly up the pathway toiling and tottering behind his ill-balanced vehicle.

Then he came opposite the barber's door, and the noise struck me in the face like the blast of a tempest. I drew back with a shudder, knowing now

that the cause was the greaseless wheel of the barrow. Laugh not, O reader, for so terrible a thing is this wail of the China wheelbarrow that His Honour of Weihaiwei has promulgated an Ordinance awarding imprisonment for the first offence, death for the second, and a five-dollar fine for the third. So wheelbarrows are of blessed memory in Weihaiwei, for the Chinaman loves them, chiefly, for that which renders them a terror to the European. But elsewhere in China they flourish, to the confusion of euphony and the glorification of discord.

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHING THE WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY

I ARRIVED at Weihaiwei on the evening of 6th February, and found myself in trouble ere I put foot on shore. Travellers had told me that I was going to a place where were a club, a mess, and two hotels; that the social amenities included the society of about twenty ladies, frequent racing, a hunt, a Turkish bath, a British fleet, and a Government House. Whoever has known a British station east of Suez will understand that my heart beat pleasantly at the prospect, for in these things are comprehended all the elements of a polite existence.

My mission was to be kept a profound secret, for obvious journalistic reasons. So when I heard from the agent of the ship, who stepped aboard as we dropped anchor in the Bay, that Government House, the regiment, the best hotel, and the Turkish bath were on the mainland, and that the ladies and the British fleet (both ladies and fleet had been exaggerated in number) were concentrated at the Island, I was sadly perplexed. For I could not ask whether the Island or the mainland would more effectually assist the scheme in hand.

I therefore put personal predilections on one side and stepped into a dirty sampan, the skipper of which promised to take me to the mainland in half an hour, and actually did so in one hour and a half. Government House was on the mainland, and where the King's trusty servant was, there might I depend upon receiving counsel and comfort. The voyage across the Bay was rough and cold, and when landed upon the beach below the hotel I was chilled to the bone. It was also pitch dark, and the water swirled among the rocks on the shore in no inviting manner, but the boatmen carried me safely through and dropped me upon the sand, a stiff and frozen remnant of the optimist I had been.

The hotel was shut up for the winter. Its hundred rooms were empty, and its big corridors dark and draughty. But the manager mobilised the housekeeper, the cook, and the butler, and soon I was furnished with a room and a blazing fire. Then I heard that the Commissioner was absent, but that the commandant of the Chinese Regiment was acting for him. So I wrote to Colonel Bruce, and in response received the cheery British reply, "Come and dine and talk it over."

The outcome of the conversation was that the erection of a wireless station in Chinese territory, for many reasons, appeared out of the question. Then at Weihaiwei there existed an Ordinance

which precluded the establishment of any telegraphic apparatus without Government sanction. But on the return of His Honour some days hence, it was possible that that difficulty might be smoothed over. Then about the big stick—well, if a certain Engineer got leave, and liked to spend his holiday joining wood and wire together, that was his business. And as for the best point for a wireless station, Colonel Bruce's stable was at my disposal, and I might ride around and choose.

The kindness with which I had been received, and the nuttiness of the port, were conducive to a return of optimism. I walked back to the hotel through the frosty, starlit night building masts that towered to the very heavens, and evolving battle telegrams that would reach London before the Generals in Manchuria left their beds to fight them.

In the morning I interviewed Griffin, the Engineer, and he said that leave was due to him, that he liked building masts, and would build one for me that would have to be lowered when the moon went by. Poles were not easy to buy in Weihaiwei, wire stays would have to be imported from Shanghai, and the Chinese New Year, in which neither love nor money will tempt a Chinaman to work, was beginning. Yet these things were trifles. I had found the man and the place, and the money was in the Bank. Griffin went to consult his book on dynamics, and

I went riding over the sandhills to find a spot thirty feet from the shore.

When I came back Griffin was not quite so cheery; his little book had been making difficulties. I advised the cremation of the book and the immediate purchase of the poles — practical measures toward which I was impelled by receipt of a cable, dated Tokio, from the Man Behind* saying—

"*Expedite forestry scrap imminent.*"

In the afternoon Griffin set out to buy the poles for the mast. Next day I went to see him at his Yard. Protruding from the gate was an enormous, pointed stick of what appeared to me the oldest and most rotten of wood. But Griffin tapped it with a piece of iron and said it rang as true as a church bell, a rather unfortunate simile in view of the doings in the Kirk of my native land. But Griffin had never heard of the Wee, or any other kind of Frees, so I let it pass. There were other sticks, one twenty-five feet long and two feet thick, the remainder all very long, and tapering away in size like prodigious billiard cues.

I asked Griffin where he had got such monsters, for I had seen no big trees in the neighbourhood. He said that most of them had done duty as masts

* Lionel James, author of *On the Heels of De Wet*, and War Correspondent for *The Times* in many campaigns.

in Chinese junks, and that he had been compelled to pay the owners of the junks high prices in order to induce them to despoil their crazy vessels. Otherwise the kind of spars required was unobtainable in Weihaiwei.

Meanwhile I had visited the Island and chosen a place for the erection of the mast. The mainland had proved unsuitable partly owing to the distance from the cable office, which was on the Island, and partly because there was no spot that commanded a clear outlook. It was necessary that mountains should not intervene between the wireless station and any of the points of the compass from which the steamer would be likely to signal. The next thing to do was to join all our sticks, lengthwise, with iron bands, into a single mast; then to launch the mast into the sea and have it towed to the Island, trusting it might not be mistaken for the Sea Serpent, and finally hauled into position.

Whilst Griffin bribes festive Chinese blacksmiths with treble wages, let me describe what manner of place is Weihaiwei.

Imagine a straight coastline in which a Gargantuan boy had bitten a bight seven miles deep and six miles wide, and that he dropped a piece as he drew back, owing to his mouth being too full, and you have the geographical aspect of Weihaiwei. Assume the part dropped to have turned sideways

and formed a high ridge of an island in the mouth of the bay, and the coast of the bay to have been pushed back by the bite into a ring of hills, and you have the topography. Think of the Bay of Naples, and you have the scenery; of the Riviera, and you have the climate.

It is the presence of the Island that makes Wei-haiwei a harbour. Lying across the entrance to the bay, and measuring two miles in length, it shields the bay from the violent winds and raging waters of the inhospitable Yellow Sea. Under its lee float in safety every size of vessel from the gigantic man of war to the bumboat of the Chinese compradore.

The Island is a Naval institution, where our ships can obtain coal and minor fittings; there is no dock, but repairs on a small scale can be executed. A big Naval Hospital is building, and the Admiralty pigeon-holes contain plans for a magnificent harbour, including breakwaters, slips, graving-docks, etc., to cost millions of pounds. On the heights of the Island are several splendid forts which cost the Government some hundreds of thousands sterling. It is a great pleasure to visit these on a fine day and see the beautiful view, and inspect the handiwork of the Royal Engineers. There is all the evidence of skill, forethought, and expense about the forts, and all the charm of ancient ruins, for it will be remembered that when the Government

THE BRITISH FLEET AT ANCHOR IN WEI-HAI-WEI BAY

HON. J. H. STEWART LOCKHART, C.M.G.
COMMISSIONER OF WEI-HAI-WEI

SOLDIERS OF CHINESE REGIMENT,
ON GUARD AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
WEI-HAI-WEI

GENERAL MIN YONG CHOLL,
KOREAN MINISTER TO CHINA

built the forts they did not send any guns. The picturesque manner in which costly brickwork lies tumbled about is very attractive, and makes one singularly sympathetic towards that simple being the British taxpayer.

On the mainland are the barracks of the Chinese Regiment, a body now about 500 strong. Not long ago the strength of the regiment was over 1,000, but the Government decided it was cheaper to keep half that number, and so they disbanded the other half, leaving a number of buildings, erected at great outlay, empty. The Chinese Regiment distinguished itself in the China Expedition in 1900, demonstrating the fact that the native of Northern China makes a fine soldier and a bold fighter. The men are stalwart fellows, taller by some inches than the British Tommy, and broad in proportion. Their discipline is of a high order, and the seriousness with which they take their profession marks them out as of a type calculated to form an auxiliary force as valuable as our Indian Army—perhaps more so, for it is impossible to look upon the strong physique, rugged faces, and bold eyes of these men without realising that they possess more character than the native of India.

When Lord Salisbury leased Weihaiwei from the Chinese, as a counterpoise to the Russian occupation of Port Arthur, he was deemed to have gained a

diplomatic triumph. But Mr. Balfour, soon afterwards, rather discounted the value of the arrangement by stating in the House of Commons that Weihaiwei had no population, that the construction of railway communication was impracticable, and that any British subject who was foolish enough to go there for commercial purposes would be granted every facility. And he capped these happy remarks by intimating to the German Government that we should preclude ourselves from the right of building railways in Shantung. This naïve declaration seems most unfortunate, for Weihaiwei was then, and still is, populated to the extent of 500 souls to the square mile, and is universally allowed to possess all the essentials for the development of trade except—railway communication.

Our concession at Weihaiwei covers 285 square miles, containing a population of 150,000 people. 85,000 acres are planted with the scrub oak upon which the wild silkworm finds nourishment. The manufacture of silk is one of the staple industries of Shantung, and Chefoo benefits by it to the extent of a trade valued at £500,000 per annum. At Chefoo the Chinese Customs imposes both export and import duties on every commodity that leaves and enters the port. At Weihaiwei there are no fiscal restrictions of any kind.

Let the British Government signify its intention to

remain in Weihaiwei, arranging with China that our lease shall be permanent instead of dependent on the Russian occupation of Port Arthur, and trade, from being stagnant, will immediately flourish. There is an English firm ready to invest capital in silk manufacture, and many wealthy Chinese from the Treaty Ports have signified their intention of establishing branch houses so soon as the British have made up their minds to stop. Chefoo, with inferior shipping accommodation, and many disadvantages as compared with Weihaiwei, trades to the extent of £5,000,000 per annum. A goodly fraction of this might easily be diverted to Weihaiwei. If it does not gravitate towards a British port, it certainly will gravitate to the German one at Kiauchou.

It duly happened that Griffin joined the sticks, and that in one long mast they lay a quarter inside and three-quarters outside his Yard, thereby greatly exciting local curiosity. Between the mainland and the Island there plies a tiny steamboat. One day I was crossing by her, and overheard a conversation between a clergyman and a schoolmaster.

"Seen that long pole at the Engineer's yard?"

"Enormous thing! What are they going to do with it?"

"Flagstaff, the Corporal told me. But I never saw a flagstaff like that before."

"Flagstaff! Rubbish!" Here one good man leant

over towards the other and spoke with *empressement*. "Don't you believe it's a flagstaff——"

"I never did."

"It's a mast for wireless telegraphy!"

"What! Who for?"

"Who for! The Japanese, of course."

"What do they want it for?"

"Want it for! Don't you see that they have spies in Port Arthur who'll send word of everything that's done there? Then the Japanese fleet will come in here and know exactly what the Russians are about. It's a very grave matter."

"Has the British Government any right to allow such a thing?"

"Most certainly not. It's a breach of neutrality. I can't think what the Commissioner is about. I'm going to write to the papers about it. Disgraceful——"

Here we landed, and the two worthy gentlemen stepped on to the quay, and I heard no more. But I was told afterwards that they went to visit the mast and had an argument about its length. One said it was sixty feet long and the other declared it eighty. After a long discussion they decided to pace the subject of dispute, when they were dumbfounded to find it measured no less than a hundred and ninety feet.

Griffin was very sanguine about the stick—thought it a triumph of engineering skill, and patted her with

positive affection as she lay on the beach awaiting the incoming tide. I rather wondered why Griffin attributed the feminine gender to so unwieldy a thing. But he is a sentimental fellow, and, certainly, the mast proved very coy to erect. A great difficulty had arisen, for though Chinamen could be induced to work on the mainland, no power could persuade them to cross to the Island during their New Year.

At the anchorage lay a great first-class cruiser, commanded by the kind of officer who is Captain in his own ship, and Emperor of everything within range of his guns. I had dined with him; played bridge with him; spent the night in the next cabin to him, with a red-hot shot in a bucket to defeat the cold; been out class-firing in his ship, and stood the thunder of the whole armament for two mortal hours; had climbed into the tops at the risk of my neck; and narrowly escaped mangling by the machinery in the bowels of the vessel. To him I went to express my opinion of the recalcitrant Chinese.

He heard my tale of woe without saying a word, but I perceived a masterful look gather in his eye. He touched an electric bell, and in response there came a marine.

"Evans, give the Commander my compliments, and ask him to step this way."

Enters the Commander.

"Ah, S——, this damned pole of Fraser's can't

go up because the Chinese won't work. Pipe off a hundred men—Will a hundred do you, Fraser, or would you like two hundred?—and send them to put it right. Better see the job through—the bo'sun's a handy man at this sort of thing. Send him too—and I'll go over and have a look at the thing myself."

From that moment the enemies of the British Navy became my sworn foes.

The spot I had chosen for the mast was wild and inaccessible. It was situated near the end of a spit of rock that jutted out from the northern coast of the Island. Owing to the sides of the spit running almost straight down into the water, my point was hundred feet above, and nearly two hundred from ıe water instead of thirty. To build a mast thirty ɜet from the shore was a physical impossibility, for there was no shore. It was also necessary to be clear of hills, and to have the perimeter of the wireless operations entirely open to the sea. This point was the only one at Weihaiwei which fulfilled these conditions. I had ridden all around the bay on the mainland, and scrambled over places on the Island that would have shaken the nerves of an Alpine guide, searching for a better.

But it was a decidedly awkward place for erecting a mast, as there was only the top of a ridge to work upon, and no proper positions for guys and stays on two sides. Then the mast, weighing four or five tons,

had to be hauled up a precipitous slope from the water below—not a smooth slope, but one littered with enormous boulders and sharp-edged rocky débris.

In due course the mast was towed over to the Island and lay floating in the water. Griffin was in command of nearly fifty Chinamen, whom he had scraped together; I had brought the hundred blue-jackets. The latter, on the way across the Island, had had great sport snowballing each other, an amusement in which, to my chagrin, I could not join, as I had to walk in dignity with the officer in charge of the party. Griffin and the bo'sun had provided an enormous block and tackle with which to haul the mast up the declivity.

In due time the component parts were dragged up the ridge, but of mast there was nothing left but five broken joinings. The three days of iron-banding by the Chinese blacksmiths went for naught when the hauling began, and, one by one, the joinings crumpled up as they felt the strain of the tackle. The tars were very merry over it, and ran the dismembered sticks up the hill with great glee. But I walked to the point of the spit and looked out upon the lonely sea in sadness. And as I stood gazing over the deep there came the sweet comfort of a cable from Tokio—

"*Expedite forestry plant arrived.*" *

* "Forestry," cypher word for wireless telegraphy, suggested by the name of the inventor of the De Forest system.

It took the hundred sailors and the fifty Chinamen the whole day to get the pieces of the mast up to the ridge. They then arranged them with the butt at the point where the mast was to be based, the others lying along the ground in order of thickness and strength. They must all be joined again. Griffin, the bo'sun, and a cunning carpenter from the Naval Yard now held a consultation, the outcome of which was a scheme of lashing and clamping, which would take three days to execute, and in which no Chinese were to be allowed a part. I was a free agent for that time, my only duty being to prepare a sufficient force and sufficient material to hoist the mast when it was ready. It would take three hundred men and heavier tackle than existed at Weihaiwei to do this, but grave winks and nods, and half-whispered suggestions from Griffin and the bo'sun, made it clear what was required of me.

Meanwhile greater events were happening.

The news that the Japanese Fleet had sunk three Russian men of war at Port Arthur came upon Weihaiwei like a thunder-clap. Port Arthur was distant barely ninety miles, yet we could not get a scrap of information, except the meagre statement that the attack had taken place. But two days after, when crossing from the mainland to the Island, I saw a strange vessel at the anchorage. A friend with the journalistic instinct highly developed awaited

THE BUTT OF THE MAST

me at the jetty with a longboat, and in no time the six lusty Chinamen were bending to their oars, whilst my friend explained that the ship was the *Fuping*, which had left Port Arthur the night before. As we got alongside her anchor was being heaved aboard and the Captain was busy giving orders on the bridge. "No time for talking—there's the log, read it for yourself." The whole story of the attack was there, and I hastily took notes, shouting the while to the Captain for additional facts. The Captain was soon in a rage, and from the sea below came the piteous calls of my friend to hurry. I got all I could and then rushed for the gangway. The *Fuping* was steaming out of the bay at eleven knots, and the longboat was sheering and plunging madly alongside, whilst my friend clung valiantly to the ship with a boat-hook, despite the surf that broke over him with every dip. I leaped, and he let go, and the *Fuping* went steaming away to Shanghai. And soon what I had learnt was clicking its way by cable to London.

Weihaiwei was inundated with stories—Port Arthur fallen, Russian Fleet annihilated, 60,000 Japanese landed in the Laotung Peninsula, and Heaven knows what. Every rumour was pro-Japanese. I confess to a distraction which made existence almost intolerable. Out in the Far East for the purpose of recording events in the war—the

war progressing by leaps and bounds—history making—whilst I raged impotently in this backwater of the Yellow Sea. Utterly unreliable news trickled in from Chefoo, where Satan had an arsenal of his own for the speedy equipment of the largest and most ponderous lies; but I dared not cable, for it is only the New Journalism that likes imaginary information. It was whilst bemoaning my helplessness in the matter of furnishing London with reliable intelligence that my spirit was further chastened by the failure of the first step towards the establishment of the wireless.

Though I had proceeded so confidently with the mast there was still wanting the sanction of Government. Whenever the Commissioner returned I went to call upon him. It was a delicate moment, for the Ordinance was clearly framed to check telegraphic enterprise, of which the Government had the monopoly, and His Honour might not be pleased that I had proceeded so far without permission. One blessed fact there was—he was a brother Scot.

After a little conversation the word "India" was mentioned, and the Commissioner asked whether I had ever met his brother Tim. At once diplomacy was dispersed to the winds, and pegs and cigars were helping out my narrative of how Tim and myself had backed each other's horses in India, and lost; and then, later, when campaigning together in South

Africa, had yarned each other to sleep, round cheery camp-fires, about our Indian experiences.

When I left His Honour I remembered that I had completely forgotten to ask him about the wireless. I think I did ask him some days later, when he said *The Times* would have to pay rent. I asked how much. He said $10 an acre was the usual thing for Crown lands. I said I thought that a very fair charge—having in my mind that the base of the mast was only twenty-three inches in diameter, and that it would only cost *The Times* about ·001 of a Mexican dollar.

And now arrived from Tokio the following cable:—

"*Chartered steamer arrives twentieth.*"

This was quickly succeeded by—

"*Everything will arrive on 'Haimun' about ten days also lady interpreter stop you will have direction steamer base yourself Weihaiwei expedite forestry.*"

The atmosphere was becoming decidedly thick. Then again—

"'*Haimun' arrives Thursday first duty get forestry working suggest you make trip Chemulpo don't jeopardise safety vessel danger zones Russian forts expedite forestry.*

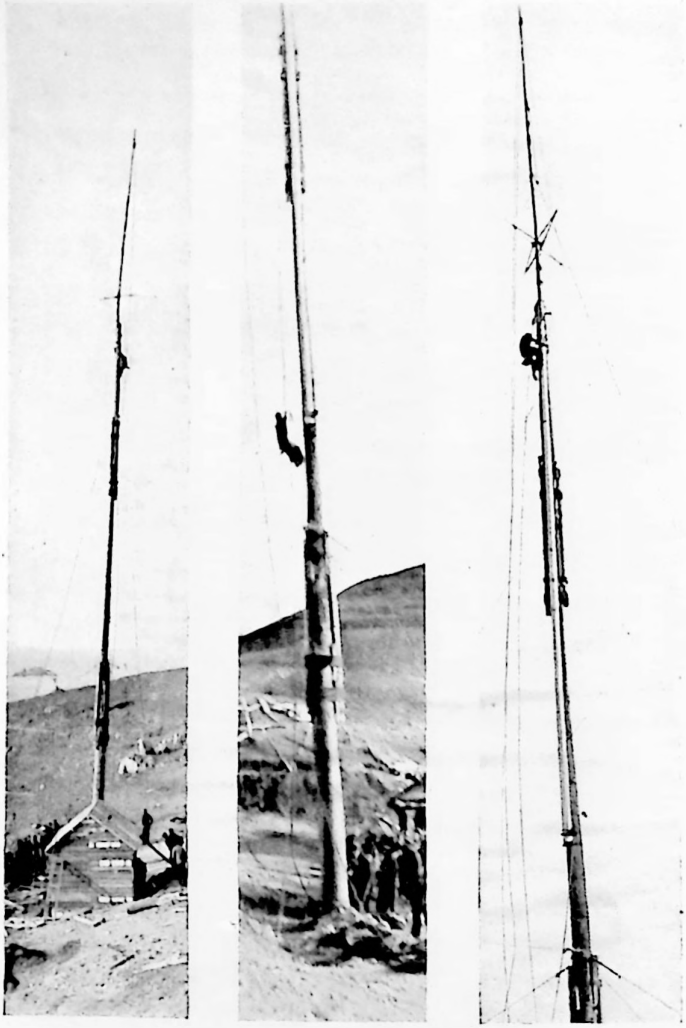
Evidently the Man Behind did not mean me to cultivate the simple life.

The three days required by Griffin and his myrmidons passed quickly, and the mast was girded and a deep hole built as a foundation. Assembled near it were a hundred bluejackets, a company of the Chinese Regiment, a hundred tatterdemalion Chinamen, the Staff of the Naval Yard, many officers of rank and distinction, and all the ladies in the Station. Griffin ran hither and thither, as full of importance as a midwife.

Trailing from various points in the length of the mast were wire stays that measured altogether nearly a mile long. Fifty feet from the base a monster tackle was attached, and seventy feet further on was another. The pulling ends of the tackles were up the side of a slope, the mast itself on the opposite slope, so that the straining ropes hung across a low valley at the bottom of which was the butt of the mast ready, on being tipped up, to slide into the cemented hole.

About a hundred men were on each tackle, the other hundred being distributed on the various slopes to steady the mast as it rose in the air.

"Haul away!" roared the bo'sun to the men on the lower tackle. Slowly the ropes tautened, and then gripped the great mast. As the strain came they "walked" her up with a sailors' chorus, until the bo'sun shouted, "Belay hauling!" The lower part was two feet clear of the ground, the upper



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'The Secret Woman' continues the scheme of the author's life-work on Dartmoor, and embraces for its theatre part of the northern region of the Moor. Its centre is the little village of Belstone, and the story is concerned with certain folk who dwell near at hand and pursue the various occupations of the district. The story is by much the most important that he has written. The theme is larger and the handling more mature than shall be found in any of his previous works.

THE VIRGIN AND THE SCALES. By CONSTANCE COTTERELL. Illustrated.

Miss Constance Cotterell's new novel is noticeably off the beaten track, since it is about English persons living in an English county. It tells, with some humour, the story of a romantic young woman of the adventurous temper who fears not to plunge into the deep places of other people's lives, and sets out to steer love's boat before she herself so much as knows what love is. It is in lighter vein than her other works, but the lightness perhaps is in the touch rather than in the material.

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THE SYSTEM. By Percy White.

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THE WEANS AT ROWALLAN. By K. Fitzpatrick.

The weans are the children of an English mother and an Irish father, who was murdered in the disturbed times in Ireland. They live at Rowallan, an old house now falling into decay, among the Mourne Mountains. An old nurse and an old coachman are their guardians, and the tale is some account of their life, their philosophy, and the people they meet with at the back of beyond.

HIS ISLAND PRINCESS. By W. Clark Russell. Illustrated.

The scene of this story is an island in the South Pacific, where the second mate of a convict ship has been wrecked. He is rescued by a beautiful girl and her father, who, like the hero, have been thrown on the island. The father is demented, and the daughter is a wild and artless creature, who quickly falls in love with the hero. The story gives a spirited description of the wrecks and of the various adventures through which the actors in the drama pass, incidents of a most striking and tragic character.

THE GATE OF THE DESERT. By John Oxenham, Author of 'Barbe of Grand Bayou' and 'A Weaver of Webs.' Illustrated.

This romance deals with the mighty virtue of self-sacrifice. It is the story of a high-souled and beautiful girl, who, snatching at the skirts of a happy chance, offers her life for the righting of a great wrong. The terrible game of life and death is played out in the waters adjacent to the Canary Islands, on the desert borders of the Sahara, and finally in Mashonaland. The girl suffers tribulation by sea and by land, but wins the hazard in the end. One of the raciest characters in the book is a little Jew financier, who is tossed by circumstance, with the girl and her companions, into outer darkness, but contrives even there to play the game, and to beat even his own ideals.

THE GOLDEN BOWL. By Henry James.

'The Golden Bowl' deals with a situation which, as frequently occurs in the author's novels, is to some extent 'international'; with complications gathering round a trio of Americans who have embraced a European life, and who are exposed thereby to unfamiliar dangers and confronted with difficult questions. The questions here, however, are not in the opposition to compared and contrasted social habits and ideals, so much as in the deeper elements of drama, the drama of character and passion, with its inevitable climax and catastrophe.

MRS. GALER'S BUSINESS. By W. Pett Ridge. Illustrated.

In this book Mr. Pett Ridge gives the story of a good tempered, energetic little woman of Clerkenwell, devoted to her boy and to the laundry business. How both succeed, and the way in which each repays her, is told by a cheerful pen that has already given much information to the world concerning the people of London. Readers of Mr. Pett Ridge's works will meet here new scenes and new friends.

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THE CASTLE OF THE SHADOWS. By Mrs. C. N. WILLIAMSON, Co-Author of 'The Lightning Conductor.' Illustrated.

BARHAM OF BELTANA. By W. E. NORRIS.

Barham of Beltana, a wealthy Colonist, son of a convict, whose transportation to Van Diemen's Land on a charge of embezzlement he has always maintained to have been a miscarriage of justice, is brought, through a love affair between his daughter and a young English officer, into intimate relations with a family in whom he does not at first recognise the descendants of his father's alleged victim. Owing to his pride and obstinacy, which are equalled by those of the young man's relatives, the results of discovery seem likely to destroy the happiness of two pairs of lovers, when a solution of the difficulty is suddenly provided by the intervention and laying of a well-authenticated ghost.

The scene is laid in Tasmania, Malta, and England.

THE DRYAD. By JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY, Author of 'If I were King.' Illustrated.

Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy's new romance is laid in an environment new to fiction. The scene is Athens, but not the classic Athens, nor the Athens of to-day, which have often found their chroniclers. Mr. McCarthy has chosen the dawn of the fourteenth century, when Greece was governed by splendid French adventurers, whose courts were centres of wealth and chivalry. In this brilliant world of knights and ladies, of tournaments and gallantry, some marvellous adventures happen which link the new world with the Age of Gold.

THE TEMPESTUOUS PETTICOAT. By ROBERT BARR, Author of 'The Countess Tekla,' etc. Illustrated.

A characteristic, breezy, and humorous romance of an over-rich girl with a craze for titled personages. The story is told by Rupert Tremorne, a former member of the English diplomatic service, who has found himself stranded in Japan by a series of curious circumstances. He becomes the secretary of the father of the heroine, a multi-millionaire, travelling in the East in his yacht. Here the story begins, and the action at once becomes as rapid as that of a Japanese campaign. Tremorne takes the party to Korea, where the emperor falls violently in love with the young woman, and desires to marry her. His courtship is fast and furious, and leads to many strange complications, which Mr. Barr has told in his bright and vivid way.

The story satirizes certain *nouveau riche* American tendencies, is thoroughly original and 'up-to-date,' and the characters are all interesting. The book has above all things that merit which Mr. Barr's work never fails to possess—that of always entertaining the reader.

PETER A PARASITE. By E. MARIA ALBANESI. A New Edition.

MADAME BUTTERFLY. By J. LUTHER LONG, Co-Author of 'The Darling of the Gods.'

A charming and pathetic Romance of modern Japan.

A VOLUME OF STORIES. By Mrs. B. M. CROKER.

sagging and swaying with the impulse to rise. Then the second tackle was applied and the top began to lift, only the point of the whip-like topmast seeming loth to leave the ground. There was a horrid curving of the upper lengths of the mast, which bent like a bow and looked as if it must break. Then the lower tackle was hauled upon, and as the men strained upon the rope—something gave.

The lower mast sank back to the ground, leaving all the weight on the upper, which cracked with the noise of a thousand pistols, sprang into the air and then fell back in pieces, completely broken. The two teams of men were tumbled into inextricable heaps as the ropes on which they hauled suddenly slacked off.

Ten days' work and planning destroyed in a moment!

One hundred and ten feet of the mast had remained perfectly rigid under the strain imposed, and in a consultation of experts they decided that it was advisable to hoist this part, and finish the mast afterwards by rigging topmasts, one after the other.

After half an hour of preparation up went the hundred and ten feet. It reached the perpendicular, almost, when there was an ominous waver, a terrified shouting, and a crowd of the Chinese soldiers broke in two, and scampered sideways. Down crashed the massive pole where the men were grouped but a second before. The top twenty feet snapped off like

a twig, gave a bound and plunged over the cliff. The sailors on the tackle had held on like men and were trailed along the ground and piled in struggling masses. My despair at this second catastrophe was forgotten in thankfulness that nobody was killed. There was only a crop of bruises sustained by the plucky fellows who were dragged by the ropes.

Once more they tried, and this time the remaining ninety feet of the mast was firmly established and stayed with half-inch wire rope calculated to stand a cyclone. The further ironwork required for the new plan was ordered, and I must now wait several more days ere there was a possibility of the mast being completed.

CHAPTER III

CRUISING IN THE *HAIMUN*

THE *Haimun* was well known in the China Seas. She had been used as a transport by the British in the Peking affair of 1900, and latterly as a despatch boat by the U.S. Army in the Philippines. She could do her sixteen knots at a pinch, her engines being particularly powerful for a boat of her size. She was signalled on the morning of 18th February, and soon after glided like a swan into the bay.

I lost no time in getting on board. Whilst being rowed out, I perceived a lot of wreckage on both masts; evidently something had gone wrong. The Captain met me at the gangway, and I made the acquaintance of the ship's officers, the two wireless operators from America, and the Japanese lady-interpreter. The wireless plant and the operators had been picked up at Shanghai, and the vessel rigged with tall topmasts. Out of Shanghai she met with rough weather, and both sticks had gone by the board. Another misfortune had happened at Shanghai. The

ship's crew had declined to sail owing to the hazardous nature of the cruise, and the Captain had been compelled to ship ricksha men and coolies, at double pay. Fortunately, beside the Captain, there were six European officers who were game for anything.

I ordered steam for six o'clock, and then proceeded to examine the ship. She was certainly a trim craft both in outward looks and inside comforts. A big upper or promenade deck ran aft from the bridge, and below was the maindeck, upon which opened the saloon doors. The saloon itself was quite a spacious apartment with a cosy fireplace at one end. Off the saloon were twelve cabins with accommodation for double that number of passengers. Below there were second-class cabins and a deck for native passengers.

The wireless plant was quickly sent ashore, and having left the mast in capable hands, we sailed that evening for Korea. I had invited Colonel Bruce and a party of his officers to make the trip, so with fine weather, and a lady to grace the occasion, our first dinner on board was quite a merry function.

At midday on the 19th we made Clifford Island, the outer of the archipelago of isles, great and small, that fringe the Korean coast. After three hours' twisting and turning we came in view of the distant

anchorage. Meanwhile there was swooping down upon us an unmistakable Japanese man of war. When within a mile up fluttered her signal flags, "Who are you?" We replied, and she bore down upon us and passed within two hundred yards at full speed. As she went by every gun of her starboard broadside was trained upon us, and as we went ahead the muzzles were swung after us with a blood-thirstiness that, my military friends said, had been learnt from the British Navy.

Having taken stock of us, the Japanese cruiser now put about and steamed after us. She was dropping behind fast, but soon the white began to foam under her bows, and she evidently meant coming after us. But the *Haimun* was doing her thirteen knots, and old-fashioned cruisers don't beat that very often. She tried to catch us for some minutes, when it became evident she was being left—in itself a suspicious sign. Out fluttered her signals, "Heave to, and I'll send a boat aboard you."

Such an intimation, from a vessel carrying a couple of 6-inch guns in her bows, is not to be ignored. Our engines ceased pulsing, and soon we floated quietly amidst the quantities of drift ice that were streaming out of the harbour on the ebb tide. The Japanese vessel lay to at a safe distance behind—they weren't going to run any chance of being tor-

pedoed—and dropped a boat which bumped through the floating ice towards us. As she approached we saw that every sailor wore a cutlass, and had a rifle leaning upon the thwart beside him.

Presently the boat reached us and an officer stepped on board, his boat's crew tumbling up the gangway after him. Eight of them formed up on the deck, under command of a petty officer, and grounded their rifles with a bang, whilst the officer was escorted into the saloon. The Captain produced the ship's papers, which meant very little, as we had not cleared for any port. Our visitor began to ask a great many questions, in good English, until I thought it was advisable to employ my talisman. I drew him aside and produced a paper covered with Japanese characters and a big red-ink stamp. He laughed when he saw it, and asked why I did not show it at once. I said I wanted to see if I could get through without, but that finding he was making difficulties I had to use it. Again he laughed, saying the paper put it all right, and implying that without it we should have been turned back. This was my first of many encounters with Japanese naval officers, and it ended very pleasantly. Under way again, we dipped to the Japanese flag, which saluted in return, and we then steamed straight for the anchorage which lay ten miles ahead.

JAPANESE LANDING-STAGE AT CHEMULPO

The *Haimun* was the first private-owned vessel to arrive since the naval battle ten days before; the long and devious approach to the anchorage was thronged with transports arriving and departing, and the roadstead was so crowded that it was no easy matter to find a berth for her. Our arrival created a flutter amongst the men of war, most of which sent to see who we were, and if we had brought any letters. In these exciting times mails were not very regular. There were about thirty transports lying at anchor, all busily discharging troops, horses, and stores into lighters that were towed to the shore in long strings by steam launches.

The men of war were the same I had seen a fortnight before, but two, which then floated proudly in the water, were now lying on the bottom, showing nothing but wreckage above the surface. The *Variag* lay on her side with her long guns protruding above the water. In the muzzle of one of them had been placed a pole with a flag tied to it, as a warning to mariners. The *Korietz* sat square on her keel showing upper deck, masts, and funnel. She had been blown up by the Russians, and the whole of the forward part of the vessel had turned turtle, so that one-third of the keel was uppermost. Near by, the masts and funnel of the *Sungari* showed above the water. She was a Russian transport

which had been abandoned and sunk when the warships were scuttled.

Immediately on anchoring a boat was lowered, and we started for the shore intending to catch the first train for Seoul. In due time we arrived at the Korean capital, and at the hotel I met some of my fellow-passengers of the *Santu Maru*. From them I heard all about the naval action, and a great deal about current events. They expressed much admiration for the bearing of the Russians when challenged to come out and fight by the Japanese squadron. Their bravery, however, does not detract from the blame due to the Admiral of the Pacific Fleet, who allowed two of his vessels to be caught in such a corner.

Next day I called upon Sir John Jordan, with whom I had an interesting conversation on the situation. He was kind enough to give me a letter of introduction to the Japanese Minister, from whom I heard a great deal that proved invaluable afterwards. From him I went to see the General commanding the troops, and then to call upon various residents, ending up the day by dining at the British Legation.

It had been a great day from a journalistic point of view; I had heard almost more than I could carry. The following is a list of some of the things:—

"Sixty thousand men had been landed at Chemulpo."

"Eighty thousand had been landed at Gensan, on the east coast of Korea."

"The two armies were now converging on Ping-yang to annihilate an Army Corps of Russians waiting in ignorance of the impending attack."

"The lives and property of the Europeans in Seoul were in imminent danger, as a revolution was momentarily expected."

"The Tonghaks throughout the Provinces were mobilising and were expected to attack the Japanese army in its march between Seoul and Ping-yang."

"The Russian army was expected in Seoul within the week."

"The Pacific Fleet of the United States was coming to Chemulpo for the protection of the interests of her citizens."

"The property of the many Missionaries in Seoul was to be confiscated by the Korean Government."

"France was about to declare War upon Korea owing to the latter having handed over to Japan the railway-making privileges of the first named."

And so on. My cable to *The Times*, when I got back to Weihaiwei, did not include all these interesting statements owing to the steadying influence of my interviews with the British and Japanese Ministers. It was a great temptation to send the

complete contents of my note-book and, then, to contradict it all on the following day. Perhaps I might have done it if the cable had worked only one way, and there had been no possibility of consequences to myself. London would have been delighted with some of the items, for a good-natured appreciation of the extremely improbable is one of the leading characteristics of the newspaper readers of the day; they like to have their imaginations touched up, especially in foggy weather. Anyhow I elected to be cautious, particularly as there was every prospect of my being a frequent visitor in Seoul.

The voyage back to Weihaiwei was not so pleasing as the outward one. I had to separate the wheat from the chaff for a long telegram, which should make them forget in London what a lot of money was being spent—and there was the nightmare of the mast. As we sailed into the bay I was greatly relieved to see that the ninety feet was still erect.

I spent two days at Weihaiwei trying to combat adversity. Nothing was right. The wire had not come from Shanghai; some of the wireless machinery was broken, some of it was missing; a new topmast for the mast must be procured, for the existing one had cracked—all Weihaiwei had been scoured in vain to find one. The last difficulty I got over by inspecting the various flagstaffs on

the Island. When I had found one suitable I went to the Naval authorities and said I wanted it, and would put up a new one so soon as the material could be procured. In a few hours the chosen stick was lying alongside the others—the Navy understands a business proposition. As for the missing gear, there was nothing to do but stamp about, and spend money in telegrams.

Once more I got matters in train as regarded the mast, and again set forth for Korea. This time I took only one friend, so that our party consisted of two men and one lady. Miss Osaki had purchased the materials for making sponge-cake, a delicacy in the manufacture of which the Japanese excel, and we beguiled the outward voyage by helping her to beat eggs and worry dough in the sacred precincts of the saloon. And when the sponge-cake materialised—we gave it to the fishes; for the Chinese cook, jealous of this interference with his divine right, had spoilt it in the baking.

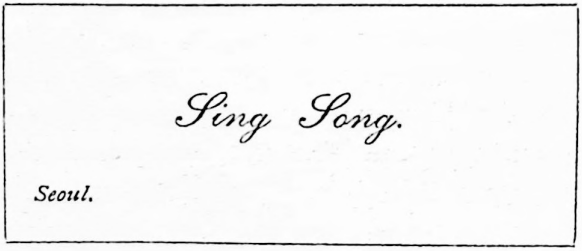
Instead of reaching Chemulpo the next evening we found ourselves mixed up among the islands, owing to a mistake in the navigation. When night fell we had to anchor, for there were no lights to guide a course, and the tides and prevalent foul ground made sailing in the dark impossible. Next morning, however, we arrived at Chemulpo, and found things much as before, except that my old

friend the *Santu Maru* was busy salvaging the *Variag*.

On reaching Seoul I heard that the whole of the 12th Division had been landed, and that the other two divisions required to complete General Kuroki's Army would probably be landed at Chinampo, as the Japanese troops were now in occupation of Ping-yang, and so made the northern port available as a sea base. The Tonghaks were still going strong, and the army from Gensan was closing on Harbin. Neither the American Fleet nor the French Army had arrived. Port Arthur, of course, had fallen. I was lucky enough to get a translation of the Agreement between Japan and Korea just then signed, and other information which so far had not reached the London press.

I also took back to Weihaiwei a Korean servant, warranted to cook, wash, wait at table, and conduct family worship. He spoke excellent English, having been brought up by missionaries. He wore a long white frock, under which peeped a plum-coloured silk waistcoat, a watch with a heavy silver chain, a brass brooch and black velvet shoes, and a wonderful hat of woven grass that cost fifteen shillings. With this picturesque gentleman I returned to the *Haimun*, feeling that if he did nothing more than strut in rear he would fully earn his pay—£3 per month. He gave me his card; on one side were

printed some Korean characters, on the other the legend—



I must now relate that on the previous voyage a number of distressed Chinamen, fearful of the coming clash of arms, had sent me a deputation praying for a passage to China. I consented—at $10 a head. Over a hundred came, and so helped the coal-bill. This time the Chinamen crowded the wharf, and I began to think there was more money in passengers than in news. Just before starting I got a letter asking if I would take a Korean gentleman and his retinue—first class. I said yes, again—at $40 a head. Two ladies of Russian and Austrian persuasion, who had helped the soldiers at the Russian Legation *pour passer le temps*, also wanted to come.

And finally, a Punjabi shawl merchant from Bombay salaamed deeply, and prayed me to carry him from this land of Shaitan. When I consented, in his own language, he jumped like a man suddenly

shot, and then fell at my feet and embraced my knees.

When I went on board I found a gentleman in the uniform of a full general, and another dressed as a junior officer, parading the deck with clanking swords and bidding farewell to hosts of friends. It turned out that the Korean gentleman was the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Korean Majesty to the Court of Pekin, with his A.D.C. and Secretary. I rather regretted the forty dollars—but not sufficiently to refund them.

The anchor being weighed, we all went in to lunch —a Captain in the British Army, a Japanese lady, the three Korean gentlemen (one of whom ate butter by transferring lumps of it to his mouth on a knife), Anne of Austria and her Russian friend, the turbanded Punjabi, and my humble self at the head of the table, with Sing Song standing solemnly behind. It is for moments like these that one lives.

During lunch the chimney leading from the saloon fireplace to the upper deck went on fire and blazed furiously for five minutes. Things looked quite nasty for a time, but the heavy steam hoses soon quenched the conflagration. No sooner had we got clear of the land than a heavy gale sprang up, and the *Haimun* began to plunge and roll. I immediately retired to my bunk and wedged myself in with pillows, knowing from experience that adoption of the

horizontal is the only way to defeat the demon of sea-sickness.

It was a melancholy voyage. As we got into open water the gale increased to one of those typhoons that are the curse of the China seas. Waves broke over the ship incessantly and flooded her. The cold was intense, and everything on board froze. Towards midnight the Captain hove to, as the height of the seas made it dangerous to drive the vessel into them. Unfortunately there was only 300 tons of coal in the bunkers, and, so lightly laden, the *Haimun* tossed upon the waters like a cork.

In the middle of the night a towering sea smashed over the forecastle and carried away the port bower, an anchor weighing two or three tons. Attached was ninety fathoms of heavy chain, which tore through the hawseholes to the bottom of the Yellow Sea with a roar that shook the whole ship. Next we shipped a sea that dashed against the engine-house and smashed the chief officer's cabin, nearly drowning him. Another and another came aboard and swept along the alley ways, flooding the saloon and cabins. I had the pleasure of seeing my books, papers, clothes, boots, etc., washing about the floor, and of feeling so ill that I could not get up to rescue them.

In the morning we got under the shelter of the Shantung Promontory and the sea abated. As we

neared Weihaiwei the passengers crept out of their cabins looking miserable wrecks, the women in particular being very woebegone from cold and sickness. The pitching had smashed all sorts of things on board: amongst others the heavy glass globes protecting the electric lights had been jerked from their fastenings and lay in broken pieces all over the saloon and cabins. The ship herself was coated with ice six inches thick, which covered decks, boats, and rigging. People boarding us at Weihaiwei asked if we had come from the North Pole.

In my absence matters connected with the wireless had progressed. The cape where the mast stood was littered with material of all kinds, and quite a number of Chinamen had come to look upon it as a regular means of obtaining a livelihood. Those engaged as night watchmen had a particularly easy job, for they lounged about all day doing nothing but smoking their pipes, whilst during the night they slept the sleep of the just in the bosom of their families—until I discovered this variation of the simple life. As for the mast itself, the ninety feet still adorned the landscape, but the topmasts remained prone upon the earth, subjected daily to repeated lashings and bindings with rope and iron. Everything was governed by a Plan which the experts approved of, and in which I had no part except as Chief Mourner when it went wrong.

By this time the *Haimun* was getting short of coal, and I debated whether to buy at Chefoo and enrich the local mongers, or to make a voyage to Japan and load up direct from the mines. Things were quiet in Korea, and I had sucked Seoul dry of news. Finally I cabled to Japan for a thousand tons of coal to be ready, and then we sailed. Poor Miss Osaki had been completely knocked up by the stormy voyage from Chemulpo, and I left her sick in bed at the hotel. She afterwards returned to Japan, as we found the work far too rough for a woman, however plucky.

To Nagasaki was two days' sail, and by a special dispensation of Providence the weather was fine. It was curious sailing in the warm sunlight and soft spring breezes with masses of ice still clinging to the ship. It was not until we entered Nagasaki harbour, where the heat was considerable, that the evidences of our stormy voyage from Chemulpo disappeared.

Soon after leaving Weihaiwei, upon a clear star-lit night, I was called up to see the Japanese Fleet cruising in our course. Two miles ahead the dimly perceived horizon was broken by what appeared to be a series of low black islands. Careful scrutiny showed these islands to be massive ships, slowly crossing our bows. They carried no lights, and the Welsh coal by which they were driven made no smoke. Like monster ghosts in black, they floated mysteriously athwart our course. Then came a momentary flashing of

signal lamps, and the long line broke in two, and manœuvred into columns that disappeared, ship by ship, into the obscurity of the north. I counted sixteen vessels, all steaming about three knots an hour. They were marking time pending an attack on Port Arthur, which took place the following morning.

Arrived at Nagasaki, I had the *Haimun* docked and her bottom scraped clean, and then we coaled. Here I bought the *Fast and Furious*, a gazolene launch designed to tend the ship in harbour. Owing to the fast tides in Korean waters, and the great distances which usually divided shore and anchorage at the ports we visited, a boat artificially propelled was a convenience with which it was impossible to dispense.

I also had the *Haimun* rigged with a topmast for the wireless installation, for which the ship was practically ready, only needing a few hours' work by the operators whenever the land station was complete.

At Nagasaki I had a telegram from an old Indian friend who had been allocated to General Kuroki's Army as one of the British military attachés. He wanted a passage to Korea, and I told him to come along. Then from Tokio came a wire to say that the Man Behind and Commander Colquhoun, our Naval Correspondent, were coming. Next came a Missionary who, with his two little boys, wanted a passage to Chemulpo. Then other people brought barrels of sugar, sacks of nails, boxes of furniture, bales

of rotten fish,—in fact a cargo that would have delighted a village grocer. Like Noah, I took a little of everything, deeming legitimate all means of lowering the coal-bill.

My meeting with the Man Behind was a great event. I upbraided him for his "expedite forestry," and he reproached me with the coal-bill, nathless the fact of a small fortune in passengers to counterbalance—the result of turning a yacht into a tramp, he cuttingly observed. After mutual recriminations were over, and we were treading the deck of our yacht relating our respective trials, I asked him if he'd like an Ichiban. Before he had time to reply I shouted to the steward to prepare six Number Ones. I then collected Vincent, Colquhoun, the Missionary, and Mr. Mutton, the Chief Officer, and we all adjourned to the saloon.

They drank their Ichibans and hailed me as a discoverer. "What is it?" they asked. "Nectar?" "It's a cocktail," said I. "What's it made of?" "Where do you get it?" "Who told you about it?" were questions eagerly thrown at me. I said if they listened they would hear its history, and I related as follows.

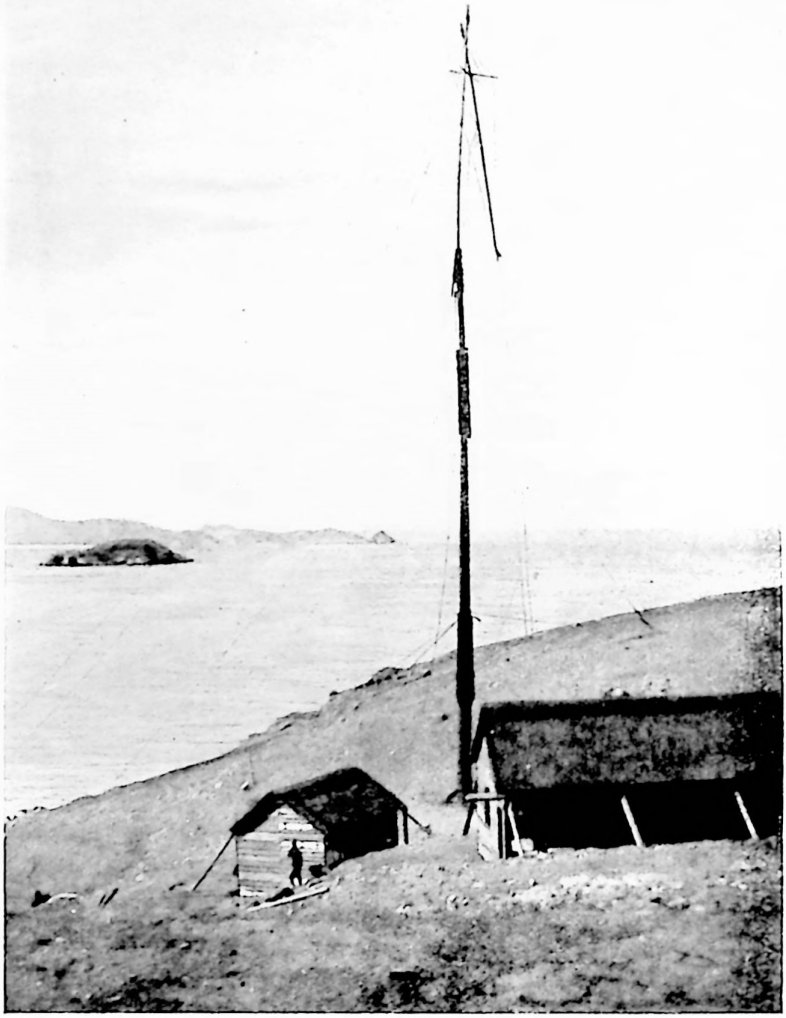
"At Weihaiwei, if you go to call upon the Captain of a man of war, an Ichiban is brought to the cabin, and no sooner do you express your astonishment and approval than a second one is placed before you. The which having drunk, you take leave and proceed

to pay your respects in the Wardroom. Here the Ichiban having been brought, you drink it up and put the glass down with the air of a cow eating clover for the first time. Whereupon another is brought, the which having drunk, you say 'Good-bye,' and beg that your boat may be called. You now proceed to the next man of war, repeat the Ichibans, and so on *ad infinitum*, or until you've called upon every ship in the fleet."

The Ichiban is a concoction of egg and milk, possessed of highly curative properties, as well as being pleasant to the taste. In frosty weather sailors find it a valuable protection against cold, and mothers of young midshipmen are glad to know that their sons take it frequently. Perhaps the mothers don't know that, besides egg and milk, the Ichiban contains Brandy, Gin, Crême de Macao, Angostura Bitters, and other devices of the Devil.

Whilst at Nagasaki there came a wire from Wei-haiwei to say that the topmast had been erected —and blown down the same night by a gale. Mechanically the Man Behind began writing upon a telegraph form, but when he'd got "expedite" down I stopped him and explained that the American operator would not stand it. Instead I wired—but this mast-building destroys one's sense of humour.

We were a joyful party on the voyage to Chemulpo —when those of us concerned could banish thoughts of wireless telegraphy. The great attraction on board was Sing Song—in Nagasaki his kit had made



THE WIRELESS STATION—AFTER A TYPHOON!

quite a sensation—who detailed at length his experiences during the typhoon. He told, with graphic gestures, how he had been tossed in and out of his bunk, and how, three times, he was sure he was dead. He ate nothing all the time—at which statement somebody asked him "Why?" His reply came in reproachful tones, accompanied by a sweep of his hands from waist to face, and from thence outward with a despairing swoop—"Because all make sprout out."

Next time he felt sick the Commander had him up and advised a drink of sea-water. It was a rough day, and the water kept breaking over the ship. We saw Sing Song standing in the lee of the galley with a teacup in his hand snatching at the tops of waves as they tore past the rails. One bigger than the rest came along and jumped aboard, soaking Sing Song to the skin and leaving nothing of the cup but the handle round his finger. Whereupon a good-natured sailor gathered a bucketful out of the sluicing scuppers and held it up for Sing Song to drink. Drink he did, and the subsequent sprouting very nearly killed him. He resigned at the end of that voyage, concluding it was better to starve on land than sprout at sea.

On return of the *Haimun* to Weihaiwei there was a protracted period of delay in connection with the wireless which, despite the most generous assistance from our naval friends, declined to become

ready. More than one mast was blown down by the high winds, and other catastrophes happened to the machinery. Meanwhile the *Haimun* was busy patrolling the Korean coast and scouting off Port Arthur, Colquhoun being desperately keen on seeing a naval action.

But one day there came an end to our troubles, and the Man Behind conversed with me at a distance of fifty miles by wireless telegraphy. It was an ecstatic moment, for the mast reared its slender head 170 feet in the air, and the engines and electrical plant worked like clockwork. Athearn, the land operator, said that Brown's juice from the *Haimun* wasn't so good as his own, because the mast on the ship was not so high as the pole at Weihaiwei. The truth of this statement will be obvious to everybody who knows that "juice," in the American language, means the electrical radiations which influence telegraph instruments.

More than once a gale carried away the upper part of the mast, and minor troubles occurred occasionally, though on the whole we got splendid results. On one occasion when sailing from Chemulpo to Chinampo we communicated with Weihaiwei at a distance of 190 miles, being a record for wireless telegraphy, with the limited appliances at our disposal.

On returning from Chinampo to Chemulpo with a budget of important news we could not get into touch with Weihaiwei, and were compelled to run across to cable the news and see what was the matter.

We arrived at the eastern entrance to the bay in the middle of the night with a considerable swell on the water and a rising wind. The Captain objected to entering the anchorage in the dark, so we slung the *Fast and Furious* overboard and I got ready to go off in her to the Island and despatch the telegrams. The little boat pitched heavily in the water and none of the Chinese crew would go in her, which affected the morale of the Japanese engineer. However, he followed when given a lead, and finally the ship's bo'sun hustled an old Chinaman in with us. The *Fast and Furious* was simply a Japanese sampan with an oil-engine fitted, and her long, narrow prow was highly unsuited to a rough sea, as we speedily found when clear of the ship.

The Chinaman immediately covered himself over with a blanket, and took no further interest in the proceedings. We took in a good deal of water, but made a fairly easy passage, as wind and sea were behind, and reached the jetty safely in about an hour. There I met the land operator, who had received our messages all right and had despatched them. He told me how the operator in the ship should readjust his instruments, and we then set out on the return journey.

Skirting the Island the water was comparatively smooth, but when clear of the land and into the open sea, it became quite alarming. Nearly every sea broke over the bows, and one lifted the little hatch that covered the gazolene tank and swept it

into the bottom of the boat. By this time the Japanese engineer in the stern was chattering like a monkey, and whenever I moved forward to cover up the hatch he yelled at me to sit still. My weight further forward would force her head too far into the waves, whilst, if the hatch was not covered quickly, we would be swamped.

The Chinaman kept his head hidden in his blanket as before, and seemed quite indifferent whether he returned to the *Haimun* or departed to join the souls of his ancestors. The awkward part of the situation was that if the boat filled she must sink like a stone owing to the weight of the engine. Then we had only one lifebuoy, and one bucket with which to bail. I tried signalling to the *Haimun* with the lantern, but no sooner did I hold it high enough to be seen than the wind blew it out.

Finally we got back to the ship none the worse except for a wetting, and the bad taste left in the mouth by the hurried reviewing of sins. Looking at the chart soon afterwards, I discovered that the tail of the island was marked broken water, and there is no doubt we were lucky in having escaped becoming food for the fishes.

The *Fast and Furious* was a dangerous little vessel, and we all had narrow shaves in her, for between the shore and anchorages on the Korean coast there is usually several miles of nasty water caused by tides that rise and fall thirty feet, and

cross winds which sweep down from the hills. One adventure none of us will ever forget. At Chinampo a retired ship-captain, who did a little piloting in these waters, paid us a visit, and we sent him home late at night in the *Fast and Furious* with a bottle of whisky in each pocket, and a fair quantity in the usual place.

There was a tremendous tide racing out of the inlet, and a great quantity of drift ice floating on the water. If anything went wrong with the engine of the boat she would inevitably be swept out to sea, and her occupants frozen to death. And if she collided with a big lump of ice she would probably be stove in. These things we began to realise when the little boat did not return so quickly as we expected.

We waited for an hour, but the panting of her diminutive engines never came. Two hours, and still there was no sign of her. We were absolutely helpless, for any of the ship's boats would be quite useless in such a stream. There was nothing to do but wait for daylight, and I don't think any of the Europeans on board got much sleep that night. But it turned out all right. The boy in the darkness had run her upon the mud and stuck fast. Our old friend and his bottles were carried to dry land, whence he sent blankets to the crew of two. They spent a not over-comfortable night in the bottom of the boat, and at the first gleam of day pushed off, and overjoyed us by their return.

Of the various adventures of the *Haimun* and her

little sister the *Fast and Furious*, it would be possible to tell much more, but with a long campaign to describe I must needs confine myself to one more incident.

The *Haimun* had been hovering about Port Arthur for nearly three days, watching the entrance to the harbour and reporting by wireless, every few hours, what was seen. There was reason to believe that the Russian Fleet was coming out, and that Togo was waiting to smite them hip and thigh—the very moment for which *The Times* had spent its money.

I was sitting in the Club on the Island despairedly endeavouring to work out the strategic necessities of Weihaiwei in time of war, and wondering what poor Ting had thought about it some ten years before. I was in a pleasant room overlooking the bay, the room in which the brave, but luckless, Chinese Admiral had taken his own life, after surrendering his fleet to the Japanese. It was easy to imagine the anchorage crowded with warlike vessels, and the last look which the Admiral had cast out of the very window where I now sat. Beyond was the room where the Japanese officers awaited his signature to the document of capitulation. Ting was said to have spent half an hour by himself looking out over the bay. Then he turned from the window in silence and went straight to the table in the next room, and signed. With Oriental dignity he dismissed the envoys of the Japanese Admiral, then

returned to this room and took a large dose of opium, which terminated his life.

I was wakened from my reveries of the tragic scene in 1894 by the hurried entrance of a Chinaman, who brought the following, the word "Rush" appearing in big blue letters on the envelope.

"AEROGRAM.

De Forest Wireless Telegraph Company.

DESPATCHED	*Off Port Arthur.*
RECEIVED	*Weihaiwei*, 9 *a.m.*, 6/4/04.
TO	*Fraser.*

Urgent we are about to be boarded by Russians unless you hear from us within three hours inform Commissioner senior naval officer and Times London James."

Quickly I was climbing the steep road that crosses the Island, on the way to the wireless station. After half an hour of walking and clambering over rocks I entered the shed and found the operator peaceably lying in a chair, smoking and reading a book, but with the telephonic listeners fastened round his head. "Any news?" I breathlessly inquired. "Nothing yet, but the Japs and the Russians are hard at it, and a German keeps chipping in every now and again."

I took the listeners and fitted them over my ears, looking out of the window the while into the north, where stretched the Yellow Sea, and where, below the

horizon, was Port Arthur and that tender merchantman the *Haimun*, surrounded by the shark-like teeth of Russian men of war. The sea was like glass, and the colour of an Italian lake. Overhead shone a bright sun, and the sky was mottled with fleecy white clouds that floated peacefully in the blue depths. Not a sail was in sight, not a sound to be heard except the low music of the wind amid the countless wire stays that surrounded the mast.

As I listened there came scratching in my ears. "That's the Japs," said Athearn, laying his ear close to my head, "they're very busy this morning." Then the instrument became silent. For two hours we listened to Japanese, Russian, and German signals, and once to the message of a British cruiser, coming round the Promontory far out of sight, to the man of war in the bay.

The Russians had it in their power completely to ruin our project, and to involve *The Times* in a loss of very many thousands of pounds. It was heartbreaking, too, to think of the weeks of labour and anxiety spent upon the establishment of the wireless, all now to be in vain if the ruthless Russians chose to sink the ship or take her into Port Arthur. The very least to expect was that they would destroy the wireless plant on board. There was also the consideration of human lives, of the risk to which I dared not allow myself to think. But it *was* a risk, when the fate of Japanese transports is remembered,

and that the Russians, a few days later, publicly announced to the Powers that, if they caught us, we would be shot as spies. The rights of the Russians with regard to the *Haimun* do not enter into the scope of my narrative; all I knew was that the elements of tragedy lay below the distant horizon, and that the minutes of the expiring three hours flew quickly.

As twelve o'clock approached Athearn got up and paced the room uneasily, went across to the engine-room, and kept looking up to the masthead and across the sea. I remained still, straining my ears for the mysterious scratches, the while my mind was racked with anxious thoughts.

Just at twelve, when suspense had become unbearable, there came a loud rip in my ears. The operator heard it from the other end of the room, and bounded towards me with the remark, "That's Brown." He settled the listeners over his head, and grasped a pencil. He wrote the words one by one as he mentally deciphered the loud and continuous scratching. What they were matters little; the *Haimun* was free and steaming hard for Weihaiwei. She had been boarded by the *Bayan*, and whilst things were looking black, the *Bayan* signalled to the two officers investigating, and they had dropped everything and dashed back to their vessel. We knew afterwards that the *Bayan* just got back to Port Arthur in time to escape the Japanese Fleet. Next morning the

story of the encounter appeared in *The Times*, and is too well known to need repetition. For my part I never want to know such another three hours.

At this time the Japanese Government had decided to let representatives of the Press join General Kuroki's army in Korea. James's Pass was in Tokio, and we wired to send it to Korea, and to obtain substitution of my name for his, he having decided to take over the ship and let me go with the troops. It had been a great experience establishing the wireless, one I vowed never to go through again. The *Haimun* was a pleasanter episode, but the tumultuous waters of the China seas are no place for yachting, and I pray, if it may ever again be my lot to run a despatch boat, that her voyaging may lie in smoother latitudes.

So on the 10th of April I bade farewell to Weihaiwei, and, with four handsome ponies bought from the Chinese Regiment, together with servants and camping impedimenta, embarked on the *Haimun* for the last time.

We sailed to Chemulpo, where we heard that the other correspondents had gone to Chinampo, to land and march after Kuroki. After a last visit to Seoul I rejoined the *Haimun*, which landed me at Chinampo in great haste, and thereafter steamed to Port Arthur, where she witnessed the naval engagement of 14th April, and saw the ill-fated *Petropavlosk* go down.

THE MAN BEHIND
AND SOME OF *THE TIMES* STAFF

CHAPTER IV

AMONGST THE PHILISTINES

LANDED at Chinampo I was encountered on all hands by difficulties, the pleasant problems upon which the journalist grows fat, and from which he derives a highly stimulating form of mental nourishment. My Pass, duly conveyed from Tokio by a brother scrivener, had arrived, and I was full of joy to think that I might now proceed into that *ewigkeit* into which the Japanese army had disappeared—until I realised that the Pass, so long and anxiously awaited, was made out in the name of the Man Behind. What that means in far-Oriental hands is misfortune beyond the comprehension of readers accustomed to the less devious mental processes of the West. But the fact that the landing officer at Chinampo was bound by every fibre of his constitution to resist my claims to official recognition weighed heavily on my mind. I went to the disembarkation office in all humility, and pointed out that Tokio, in goodness of heart, had made out my permit to accompany the troops in

the name of a beloved colleague who was unable to go, and who desired that I might take his place.

At the end of much weary waiting, and countless turnings of my swear-wheel, I left that office in the aching frame of mind understood of people who depart from the sanctum of a dental professor with the knowledge that they must return thither ere the light of another day fades. It was not to be. It was for that man to go whose name appeared upon the Pass from Tokio.

And so my horses, my servants, my tents, my vessels of brass and of alumin, my tins of pottage, my vestments of khaki, my scrolls and parchments were to be of no avail, and the girding of my loins as naught! Truly it was an occasion for the application of Western intellect to the diplomatic methods of the East. I despatched a telegram couched in heroic terms to a powerful friend in Tokio, whose acquaintance with the subtleties of that sphinx-like capital was unrivalled. In due season the telegram fructified.

But meanwhile there lay in the anchorage the good ship *Haimun*, bearing the steeds that were to carry me into the thickest of the fight, the servants that were to administer to my needs, and the wherewithal to satisfy the insistent small voice that, to the exclusion of all other voices in the internal orchestra of a War Correspondent, raises itself three

times a day. These had to be landed with speed, for the *Haimun's* gossip at Weihaiwei had whispered across the waters of the Yellow Sea that events were pending elsewhere which made it well for her to set her stacks a-smoking. Yet to land goods and chattels at Chinampo was an Herculean task, for all things great and small were in the possession of the Japanese Government, who help none save those of their own choosing.

And here came a happy thought, one bred of contact with the East, one after the very own soul of the Oriental.

The beloved colleague whose name appeared upon the Pass must materialise, must present the luckless document, must demand of right that the chosen of the Mikado's Government shall obtain full and ample assistance in time of need. And so it came to pass. For the friend, presented by my very self, received with compliments and grim politeness, outcome of silent and inward approval of the manœuvre, was told that his horses, his luggage, and all that he possessed would be landed at once.

We departed from that office in peace, wended our way to the river bank, and shouted for the *Fast and Furious*. She cast loose from a buoy, took us off the landing-stage, and crunched her way through the rippling water towards the taper wireless mast that showed clear above the forest of anchored

shipping. Swinging round the stern of a huge transport we came upon the *Haimun*, and to our astonishment found alongside her two great barges and a steam pinnace, the derrick and the donkey engine hard at work, and a white pony suspended in mid-air, in process of being transferred from the ship to a barge. It was the last of my four ponies, three of which already stood amazed in one barge, the other being filled with my heavy baggage. The Japanese officer in charge informed us as we stepped aboard the *Haimun* that all was now ready, and that with our permission he would tow the barges to the shore. Here was a revelation of what the Japanese could do. Whilst we were strolling along the river bank, instructions for the landing of my kit had been sent by telephone, and instantly acted upon.

And no sooner had I begun to pack up my personal effects than the Man Behind came into my cabin like a whirlwind—"Quick, quick," he cried, "in with your things," and he opened out a great canvas bag and threw into it books and papers, boots and clothes, toothbrushes and pomade pots, razors and inkbottles, until nothing was left. In a state of bewilderment I was bundled over the side.

The valves of the *Haimun* were roaring; the Captain stood on the bridge, the Chief Mate on the fo'c'sle, awaiting the order to weigh anchor. It was a case of leaving me. "Good-bye," "Good luck,"

LANDING TROOPS AND HORSES AT CHINAMPO

"Don't touch unboiled water," "Keep clear of the Rooshians" were called across the water to me as the pinnace puffed to the shore. Then the good ship *Haimun*, her tall spar festooned with the wires that vibrated to the radiations from China 'cross the sea, slowly gathered way and steamed down the river towards the open sea whence had come the message that had called her in such haste. Little I guessed then that I should never see her again, and that the journalistic triumphs, which I hoped to be mine through her agency, were to be restricted by the inexorable decree of Tokio.

With the exception of War Correspondents, Heaven helps all who help themselves. Chinampo was chock-full of Japanese soldiers, sailors, officials, geisha-girls, none of whom would make room for a white man, much less a newspaper man, who in Japan ranks below a merchant, who in turn is preceded in social status by a carpenter. Hotels were non-existent, and a wetting rain upon ground sodden and muddy as only Korean soil can become precluded the erection of my precious tent. Wandering about the filthy streets, jostled by Japanese soldiery, stared at by Korean aboriginals, splashed by mounted officers, I felt the iron enter into my soul, and the stiffness depart from my upper lip—welcome signs, for it is only from the very depths of despair that a journalist emerges triumphant.

I sighted a house, respectable, clean, the windows boarded over, the door padlocked, a dwelling possessed of a general air of being closed to the world. But a tell-tale smoke issued from somewhere behind. I knocked gently, then with some insistence, finally with Anglo-Saxon vigour, which brought a Chinaman trotting out from the side. It was the abode of the Chinese Consul. At sight of a white man minus uniform the door was opened, and I made the acquaintance of Mr. Hu, the Secretary to the Consul, who "I re—gret too sa—ay iss absen from his houwse." Mr. Hu fell a speedy victim to a compliment on the quality of his English, which had been acquired at the Tientsin University. I took tea with him, smoked an ancient cigar from which the virulence had long since departed, heard his personal history and his opinions on international politics, ere I broached the subject nearest my heart. He was all willingness to assist, and so friendly that I repented the guile employed. Anyhow, that night found me comfortably installed in the house of a Chinese merchant who spoke no word of English, and who had never before entertained a European, in consequence of which my every move, every mouthful I ate, my very impulses were subjected to the keenest and most earnest scrutiny. Considering the unfathomable motives and remarkable habits of the Oriental himself, from our point of view, there is

no need to marvel that, in his eyes, our ways are strange beyond words.

A shelter over my head contented me for that night, and having seen to the bestowal of my horses and goods, I was free to take my ease. My landlord watched me lie upon the broad ledge that is the Chinese equivalent for a bedstead, sucking my pipe and sipping his tea, reading bygone news in a two-months-old paper, until I blew out my candle and entered into a land of valleys, and mountains, and streams, and roads, where transport trains trailed their weary elongated bodies around the shoulders of the hills, where the passes echoed the booming of big guns, where the crackling of musketry ran up and down the slopes, where the batteries rattled over deep rutted roads, and cavalry went by with jingle of bit and clank of hanging sword.

Next morning I dressed myself as if for a levee, and sent in my card for examination by the autocrat of the transport office. I was still officially unknown, and from my reception judged I would remain so until some cataclysm in nature inverted the order of things. So I busied myself with the pleasing task of procuring pack-saddles to fit ponies that had never done work other than carry live human beings. Interpretation went between myself and a Japanese interpreter, from that functionary to a Korean mafoo, or groom, who in turn communicated with a native

saddler whose obtuseness exceeded all that I had ever experienced. Korean ponies stand ten hands high and measure round the waist about the same as a healthy lamb. My ponies were all fourteen handers with barrels like Clydesdale prize-winners. Yet the Korean insisted that I should buy some ready-made pack-saddles built for the native product! That alone was sufficient to rouse anger, but it made me speechless to realise that my own *entourage*, because I was in a hurry to procure them, thought me illogical for not buying the saddles that offered.

Finally I obtained saddles constructed for bullocks, and having paid the price—war price—I retired to my heathen abode in sadness, to wonder if the little graven image that looked down upon me from a betinselled niche had any influence in Olympus, and if so, by what means I might avail myself of it. Whilst the idea slowly revolved in my mind there entered a man of Japan, clad in gorgeous uniform, bearing a letter for me. This turned out to be a communication from the General Commanding, who informed me that intimation had been received from Tokio that my name had been placed on the list of correspondents permitted to accompany the First Army in Korea. I blessed my friend in Tokio, and pensively looked towards the little graven image, wondering what a fixed allegiance might procure me

if a passing thought could produce so quick a return. That night I slept at peace with the world, having sent word to my following that to-morrow we would march to Ping-yang, the second city in Korea.

Least of my troubles in the morning was the procuring of a passport authorising me to proceed to Ping-yang. Soul-vexing began with the application of the pack-saddles to the ponies, and the loads to the pack-saddles. My retinue consisted of Japanese interpreter, Japanese cook, Chinese groom, and two Korean persons engaged under the impression that the care of horses had been their only business in life. One Korean, at the first blush, demonstrated his utter inability to understand the simplest matter in connection with a horse. My interpreter, contemptuous of everything Korean, said Koreans did not understand animals, and forthwith proceeded to show how my horse ought to be saddled—cantle over the withers! The Korean I could not well dismiss, as he understood a little Japanese, and was, therefore, my only medium of communication with the natives of the country. The interpreter I would have killed long before but for the fact that he had a permit from Tokio and might have been missed. The Japanese servant understood a little Chinese, so he kept me in touch with the Chinese mafoo, who, fortunately, is of a taciturn disposition, and does not dislike his enforced silence. My Japanese had the

greatest contempt for him and never spoke except to give peremptory orders.

My ponies numbered four, one to ride and three to carry packs. My first discovery was that each and every man and horse of my train knew nothing about packing. So I did a Napoleonic thing. I split my baggage in two, one lot to be carried on the three ponies, and the other to go by boat to Ping-yang. Then we loaded up and made a start, everything looking decidedly top-heavy and askew despite girthing, tightening, and balancing to the last degree of intricacy. Even so much result would never have been obtained but for the aid of a good-natured crowd, who thought it all the fun in the world to watch and criticise. Down the street, fetlock-deep in mud, my cavalcade proceeded. One hundred yards having been traversed, a Korean housewife, as we passed her kitchen door, banged a cooking-pot on a stone, and over went one pony's load. The others rocked ominously. Piled up hurriedly, the disintegrated load looked impossible, so I booked a coolie to carry part. Every half-mile some catastrophe happened, and finally I had the joy of seeing my three ponies step jauntily along carrying only their blankets, whilst my goods were borne by six stalwart natives, who demanded high pay and a slow pace. But transport difficulties grow monotonous, for they never cease in Korea.

Twelve miles we covered that day, winding round about the shoulders of hills wooded, scarred, and precipitous. Sometimes we obtained glimpses of the Taitong River, again we saw segments of sea in the far distance, and beyond, in every direction, great purple jagged mountains that looked as if they might tumble into the valleys and crush the landscape out of all semblance. The road was a mere bridle-path, frequently knee-deep in mud, cut up, melted away, indescribably rotten in places. Men and horses floundered about hopelessly when we came to a point where a stream crossed the path. Such places there was no avoiding, no circumnavigating. Here and there the Japanese pioneers had built rough bridges or laid down brushwood to stiffen the soft surface, but weeks having gone by since the troops had passed, the road had reverted to its original horrible condition. Probably there are no roads in the world so bad as the Korean. Flanking our course on both sides were paddy fields still covered with a film of water, from which the regular pattern of stumps showed dismally. Thus, with absolute quagmire on each side, it is not to be wondered at that Korean roads do not pass muster. When they leave a valley and cross the hills the ascents and descents are often steep as the side of a house, and frequently as hard, for melted snow in spring and the rains in autumn sweep every particle of earth away and leave the bare,

slippery rock to try the strength of men and the surefootedness of horses.

Towards dusk we came to a hamlet of half a dozen houses. These in Korea are mud-built, thatched with straw, and boast a little verandah behind and in front. In shape they are rectangular, usually having the kitchen at one end and two rooms beyond. The kitchen part has a hole underneath a platform, on which cooking-pots stand. In that hole is the fire, and the outlet for smoke and heat is a long passage underneath the living-rooms and a chimney in the further wall. The result is that every piece of firewood used for cooking or warming benefits not only the kitchen, but all other parts of the house. The value of a warm sleeping-place in a country where the temperature in winter frequently drops below zero needs no explaining, and the Korean is to be congratulated on the possession of a system of warming which, if it leads to the generation of insect life, has the merit of achieving the desired object in an economical manner.

Having selected the cleanest-looking house in the village, I possessed myself of a little room next to the kitchen, and, in the verandah outside, set my cooking operations in motion. My boy brought forth a little copper charcoal stove, purchased in Japan, which once loaded and set alight, quickly boiled a kettle and furnished the tea that cheers without

unduly deranging the mental faculties. The night was cold, and the floor of the room delightfully warm, its temperature amply compensating for its hardness. When I was about to turn in for the night my boy produced a large tin, which he shook violently all around my improvised couch. I asked for an explanation. The reply came: "Korea man carry plenty jump beast. Sleep Korea house catch plenty. This medicine make all die!" During the night I slept to a chorus of snores and snorts, which came from the adjoining room occupied by my servants, the coolies, and the housefolk. They were an uneasy crowd, dreaming of their sins and cursing their enemies incessantly. I was not sorry to lose consciousness of their presence, and of the ever-present possibility that my outworks of medicine might not prove sufficient protection against attack by the battalions of the many-footed that garrison the fastnesses of a Korean home.

At daybreak I caught the sun rising amidst the maze of peaks that serrated the distant horizon. All around glowed the greens, blues, purples, and crimsons of early morning in a mountainous land. The air was fresh and cool, and the whinnying of the horses echoed through it cheerfully and musically. Surely it was good to be in Egypt, despite its plagues. My followers were not so enamoured of early rising. Nothing but open doors and cold draughts

stimulated them into wakefulness and remembrance of duty. They crawled out shivering and yawning in a manner painfully European, and suggestive of the common origin of man, heathen and Christian. They showed alacrity at the call for *chow*, dropping their tasks as readily as a British workman does his tools on the stroke of six. By seven, coolies, horses, and men were on their way, and I was at leisure to climb a hill and survey the surrounding country. With the reins hitched over a bush my pony set himself greedily to devour the succulent dried grass that flourished wherever rice fields did not occupy the ground.

Vistas of hills beyond hills stretched in every direction. Here and there loomed mountains, from the crevasses and recesses of which the snow had not yet disappeared. At my feet was a circle of valleys, wooded in the ravines, grassed in the slopes, and completely cultivated in the flats. Streams meandered everywhere, springs bubbled from a dozen places on every hillside. Hamlets were scattered broadcast, and the white-clad Koreans dotted the countryside. Above me the sky was blue and the sun shone bright and warm, his rays tempered by a healthy cold wind. One of God's countries is this disputed land, almost a Garden of Eden in beauty and fruitfulness.

That day we broke the back of our journey to

Ping-yang, accomplishing four-and-twenty miles over roads somewhat less difficult of negotiation than those of the previous day. Towards evening we fell in with an American newspaper man bound for the front like myself. Our servants joined forces, and we encamped at a large village, which boasted a few houses with roofs tiled in Chinese fashion. One of these we occupied, and found it free of carnivora, but devoid of the comforting warm floor of more humble abodes. There arose in one's mind the question as to whether it were better to be cold and lonely, or to be warm and harbour the denizens of the hearth. Next morning I left early and cantered into Ping-yang, leaving my packs to follow. At Ping-yang there was a lot to do. I had to encounter Japanese officialdom afresh in order to have my passport marked for the front, and to make permanent arrangements for the transport of my kit to the north, where, in the neighbourhood of Wiju, the army was supposed to be encamped. Besides, Ping-yang was the last point in Korea where anything in the nature of civilisation was to be met with. Shortage in supplies, supplementary equipment might possibly be procured there, but further north the country was a desert so far as a European was concerned.

CHAPTER V

A DASH THROUGH KOREA

PING-YANG is encircled by an old-fashioned wall, the mere sight of which throws one's mind back into the days when the Israelites invaded Palestine and found the Philistines dispute every step of their way. From such walls the Gideonites, the Amalekites, and the Jebusites, with bows and slings, must have resisted the assaults of the hosts of Israel. The walls of Ping-yang are high and formidable-looking, pierced and battlemented, crossing ridge and field and stream in rigid straight lines. Here and there they are broken, but not sufficiently to dispel the impression that they must have been effectual for defence against men and weapons of bygone ages. But what would the ghost of M. Bloch say to them? With a penknife one can pick the stones out of the wall. One hard push at the top, and down goes masonry by the hundredweight. One little field-piece, in ten minutes, could breach such a wall so that an army might enter. The gate-ways are covered by pagoda-like erections which fit

the strange old walls as jewels do a ring. The doors in these days stand wide open for all to come and go. But such doors! The wood is old and heavy and worm-eaten. The iron nails which stud them stand out alone from the broken framework; many are missing. And the hinges and locks, the bars and bolts, they are of another age, the work of a people with a forgotten past, living in a miserable downtrodden present, whose future—ah! Japan the virile has stepped in, and who shall say what may be the future of Korea?

My pony walks cautiously over the rough stones that pave the gateway, and snorts at the débris obstructing his steps, doubtless wondering in his equine brain why all paths are not smooth and easy to the tread. But he has not been in Korea long. Once more in the sunlight, for the narrow low entrance is quite a tunnel, I see fields before me instead of a city, country instead of houses. Over a rising there are houses, some thatched Korean fashion, others tiled after the Chinese manner. The houses of the official Koreans are almost identical with the commoner sort of Chinese house, with the difference that the latter is infinitely more substantial. In fact the Korean house is like Korean food, Korean roads, Korean habits, Korean people—inferior through and through. Nothing in Korea bears comparison, except that which is purely natural.

The mountains and hills and rivers are beautiful, the towns dirty and sordid. The soil produces the finest rice in all the East, but eaten in a Korean house rice becomes an abomination. Women all the world over are considered the supreme triumph of the Creator, but in Korea they may not go uncovered lest man at the sight suffer in his digestion.

I crossed the fields by a path—street or road there was none—and entered the populated area of the city. Under foot the way resembled the bed of some rock-strewn stream. Stones were everywhere, and between every stone were dirty puddles. In the middle of every alley was an open drain wherein lay stagnant the sewage and filth of the neighbouring houses, waiting for rain to carry it away—or simply disperse it, according to the gradient on which the street was built. Streets—if they deserve the designation—varied between four and ten feet wide, and only one in all the city has any pretension to be considered level. That is the main artery of Ping-yang which, running parallel with the river, traverses the length of the city.

Here are to be found crowds of the white-robed quaintly hatted figures which alternately excite amusement and compassion in the mind of the Western visitor. They stand about or squat on their heels with an appearance of indolence visible in no other Asiatic. In fact, there is little about the

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[P.T.O.

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Korean to connect him with Asia, as we understand its peoples. His colour is light as compared with all other Asiatics, and he lacks the deference towards the white man which is associated in our minds with all Eastern peoples—except the Japanese. Why the Korean wears so strange a headgear, it is impossible to find out. Nobody in Korea knows, and nobody outside Korea would be capable of conceiving anything so unpractical, so useless, so fantastic. It is these latter characteristics of Korean habiliments that awaken one's compassion. Laughable as are the fashions in Korea, it is painful to see a well-built, good-looking, and far from unintelligent race so unconscious of the progression of the rest of the world that it retains things which are ridiculous in themselves, and, what is more serious, things that are utterly incompatible with a successful struggle for existence. Other Oriental races are practical in varying degrees. None allow themselves the luxury of being absurd in matters material to their comfort and convenience. But the Korean coolie labours in a green silk vest, smokes a pipe a yard long, wears a hat which necessitates his carrying a waterproof umbrella-like cover to protect it from the rain, and will walk fifty miles a day in a flowing garment so long that it encumbers his ankles, and must be held aside to prevent tripping.

In one corner of Ping-yang waves the American

flag. Amidst the dirt and squalor, the indolence and apathy, which the city wall encircles, there is one bright spot, one touch of colour. Nestling within trees upon a slope behind the town lies a cluster of houses. Each is surrounded by its garden, and boasts a vivid green patch of grass. Here are glass windows and lace curtains, verandah and chimneys, doormats, yet clean-swept paths. One bungalow is a school, another a hospital, the others dwelling-houses. And over against them on the opposite slope stands a little church, architecturally plain, perhaps, but homelike to the eye. Anon there comes from the tiny belfry a gentle clangour, a cheerful, hopeful, confident call to the inhabitants of the city o forsake their false gods.

They make good Christians, do the Koreans. Their own religion has small hold upon them. It consists of little more than an array of superstitions lacking the continuity, the ethical and philosophic significance, which give to Oriental beliefs that influence upon their adherents which the missionary finds so difficult to overcome. The Korean is peculiarly fitted for the reception of a benevolent creed like ours, one that promises something either in this world or the next. Overborne by an unjust and rapacious ruling class, the Korean cannot enjoy the fruits of industry or the windfalls of fortune. He must surrender, one way or another, to the

holder of office everything that affords more than a bare subsistence. So Christianity, which makes light of earthly troubles in comparison with eternal happiness, which provides a sympathetic Ruler, which magnifies justice tempered with mercy, finds in the Korean a ready and sincere convert. Missionary enterprise in the East usually does not arouse, for a variety of reasons, the sympathy of educated travellers. Yet in Korea it would seem as if the soil were suitable, and assuredly the results attained by the little band of American workers justify their existence.

A brief stay in the hospitable house of Dr. Moffett, whose deep sympathy and tactful dealings with the Koreans have aroused their warm regard, and I leave Ping-yang, possessed of the hieroglyphic passport which authorises me to proceed to the front. Seven other correspondents in great haste have left before me, for rumour is busy to the effect that the Japanese are to cross the Yalu within two days. I forsake my horses and coolies, interpreters and baggage, and on one stout pony essay to make up for lost time. A pinch of tea, a few lumps of sugar, and a well-stored tobacco-pouch complete my outfit; no blankets, no coat, no Keating encumbering my movements. Wiju is 160 miles distant, and the headquarters of the First Army are ten miles to the south, so that there is a big journey to compass before the scene of operations is reached.

Alternately trotting, walking, and leading my pony, I made good way during the first day, and calculated upon having gained upon the others by at least fifteen miles in consequence of the superiority of my mount and absence of extra weight. I reached Anju, forty-two miles from Ping-yang, in the evening, unsaddled in the first compound that offered cover to a horse, and dumped my saddle in the house without opposition from the occupier. My pony was tired, but not exhausted. He went at his feed like a glutton, and having cleaned his box and munched a little straw, lay down with a grunt and went to sleep. I invaded the kitchen of the house, whereat the females fled, and soon brewed myself a cup of tea. The housemaster produced a bowl of rice, part of which I ate, carefully avoiding trimmings. Then with my head on my saddle, the warm Korean floor for a blanket, and the tramp of the many-footed for a lullaby, I forgot all that I ever knew in the deep sleep of the justly weary.

Before the dawn had broken I was up, to find my pony busily eating the remains of last night's straw. He was glad to change over to barley, uncrushed and unboiled, a feed which only a healthy horse tackles willingly. As the sun rose we were on the road, for I designed a long journey during the day. But unfortunately a cast shoe defeated my intentions, and I had to submit to the agonising dilatoriness of a

Korean village blacksmith. This disciple of Vulcan could never have realised the dignity of his profession, else he would have exerted his brawny muscles with more vigour to aid a distressed traveller. He leisurely went through his stock of shoes to find that none were big enough. So he intimated that the job was impossible. Whereupon I intimated that he was no blacksmith, a taunt that had no effect. I bethought me then of my pocket and drew forth a large new silver yen that sparkled brightly in the sunlight. Thereafter, there was no lack of willingness, only a methodless perfunctory procedure that would have driven Longfellow's worthy into a lunatic asylum.

Finally the shoes were prepared, for, as well as the one cast, the others were only waiting a suitable moment to cease performing their functions. The Korean horseshoe consists of a plate a little thicker than tin, perforated by eight holes. The shoe placed in position, with very little regard for the formation of the foot, is then secured by nails with enormous heads. When ready the hoof is shod with eight lumps of iron, which are prevented from sinking into the foot by the plate. How it feels to a horse, goodness knows, but the suggestion to the human mind is that it must be like walking with peas in one's boots. The nails, however, have their uses, for without them the little Korean horses, carrying enormous

loads, would never be able to climb up and down the steep passes which every road crosses at frequent intervals. The shoes ready, my sturdy little horse is subjected to the indignity of being thrown. His head is pulled round with a rope until it lies along his flank, then a foot is lifted, then a rope passed behind a leg so that he cannot step backward. A push completes the series of insults, and down he goes and rolls over on his back. All four legs are roped together, and a great stake passed between to steady him. Finally his head is sat upon by the weightiest of the onlookers, and then the shoeing proceeds.

The delay cost me four precious hours, and my horse a nervous shock, which he did not easily shake off. Instead of sixty miles that day we were able to make only forty-three, but the shorter distance gave me the opportunity of accepting the kindly hospitality of an offshoot of the American mission stationed at Sunchon. During the latter part of the journey it had rained steadily, and I arrived wet to the skin and thankful indeed to find a Christian roof and good Samaritans to succour me by the way.

On the third day I hustled my little horse for all he was worth and gave the go-by to correspondents of English, Irish, German, and American nationalities. Then I caught up another American who stuck to me for the remainder of the journey. But

in front there were still two more—countrymen both, which was some excuse for not overhauling them.

My American friend was accompanied by a very fine pack-train, which possessed the magnificent qualification of always being "up." It consisted of six very large wooden boxes that travelled mysteriously in pairs. On close inspection there might be found wobbling under each couple of boxes four very thin, baby-hoofed legs, and protruding in front a shaggy head that might belong to a Scotch terrier or a diminutive Shetland pony. These animals were Korean pack-horses, capable of travelling thirty-five miles a day with 200 lbs. apiece on their backs. This unnatural ability is attributable either to the boiled beans upon which they are exclusively fed, or to the artificial stimulation of the nervous centres by heavy loads that irritate the saddle sores invariably afflicting these little beasts.

At midday we called a halt at a little village, the pack-train was parked and the beasts unladen in a small square, whereof each side was speedily occupied by dense crowds of natives eager to observe the cooking operations of such funny people. We placed ourselves in the little verandah of a house whilst the boys prepared food. Meanwhile we washed and shaved, performances which excited a great deal of comment, and all the while the people were pressing closer and closer, children of all sizes and sexes

forming an inner ring, grown-ups of all ages the outer.

We began our repast with soup, and then went on to sausages. The smell proclaimed them meat, but it puzzled the Koreans desperately to know what kind, and what part, of an animal furnished these savoury morsels. My American friend possesses a very beautiful set of false teeth which he used upon the sausages with great effect. Whilst he was slogging away a very old, toothless woman pushed through the crowd to have a good look at us. She was peering closely with her bleary eyes into my friend's face, when he stopped eating and, dislodging his teeth, suddenly shot them out of his mouth, poised on the tip of his tongue. All the little children ran away screaming to their mothers, whilst the men turned and walked slowly, but surely, in the direction of their own homes.

Only the old woman remained. My friend pulled his teeth in again with a click and resumed eating. Still the old beldame stood, bowed and eager-eyed, in front of the flashing teeth. My friend put his hand up to his mouth in a casual manner and then, suddenly, bared his gums at the old woman. They were toothless—just like her own! She gave an unearthly chuckle. Then came a hand-sweep and a click, and lo! the shining teeth were once more busy upon sausage.

The old lady stood there stiffer than Lot's wife until we mounted and rode away, watched—from cover—by the whole populace. If daily papers were published in Korea, we would have looked at the Deaths in the next morning's issues and discovered her name, for no human being could be so astounded and remain alive.

That evening we ran into the transport of the Japanese army and learned that Headquarters were just in front, and that the battle of the Yalu could not be yet awhile. So we halted for the night, glad to rest the wearied horses, and content to catch our colleagues on the following day.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE AT WIJU

BEHIND Wiju there is a lofty range of mountains. Ere one may look upon the valley of the Yalu this range must be approached from the south through a labyrinth of low hills that form ravines and gorges of great beauty. In one of these I came upon the rear of the Japanese army. A little spot of emerald amid towering brown rocks suddenly arrests the eye, inured though one may have become to the manifold charms of the way.

The little grassy plain is crossed by a shallow, sparkling stream that twists here and there as if loth to leave so sweet a spot. Here enter three roads, one from Wiju, straight north, the others from the country right and left of it. At this point the Japanese army divided, each of the divisions taking the road that led to its appointed place in the plan of disposition. The infantry had mostly gone forward, but there remained impedimenta that impressed upon one the immensity of the organisation required by a marching army.

THE PONTOON TRAIN

Conspicuous was a long pontoon train that rumbled deeply as the great blue-bottomed, white-painted sections were slowly carted along the stony road. In one corner was parked the artillery of a division, six-and-thirty guns and nigh fifty caissons, arranged in rows as neatly as if Euclid himself had seen to their apportionment. Passing backward to some depôt in rear came the transport carts of the army, both horse and hand. I stood aside to let them go by, counting the number until my arithmetic failed me. They rattled by in hundreds, nay, thousands, until I thought they would never end. When they had gone the head of the howitzer brigade appeared, and the short, thickset guns with their tarpaulin hoods crunched harshly along the rough road. Riding along I passed a telegraph company with their string of carts laden with long yellow poles and drums of wire. There was also an engineer battalion, their carts heaped up with spades and picks and other weird instruments. And a hospital train, long strings of carts and pack-horses bearing boxes with the red cross upon a white ground. Here and there were detached companies of infantry. Also a squadron of cavalry, the men breeched and booted, braided and slashed to gladden the eye. Their horses drank deeply of the sweet water, and then they went on at a prancing walk.

Truly a brave show, one to stir the blood and

quicken the imagination. Iron pontoons, broad-mouthed howitzers, slender telegraph poles—what of that? These things mean war; the men that handle them are soldiers no less than the spearmen and bowmen that fought and died on Flodden Field. Weapons come and go, but the spirit remains unchanged. The anger of individuals, that led to war in olden times, is little removed from the wrath of nations that, to-day, leads to declarations of hostility. Taunt a church-going Englishman with the North Sea incident and he will bare his teeth as readily as the Japanese who is reminded of the retrocession of Port Arthur. The honour of a nation is as tangible as the honour of an individual. When it comes to pass that a nation will tolerate insult, alas for the individuals of that nation—they will have become advocates of Peace—at any price.

Japan has a deep wrong to avenge. The howitzers, and the pontoons, and the flaunting cavalry are there to take vengeance—even if it break Japan. They represent the manliness of a nation, the manliness that is in humanity; so why should not the blood be stirred and the imagination inflamed to see their progress toward the field of battle?

Then up through the scent of fir and pine to the defile that cuts the last great ridge. The road winds in and out, curling about massive rocks, sweeping round ravines, and ever ascending. The howitzer

teams are breasting the slope, and the encouraging shouts of the drivers echo back and forward. Our horses cock their ears to the loud neigh of a charger cropping the grass high up among the trees. Flashing here and there are great wood insects of marvellous iridescent hue, buzzing like alarum-clocks as they dart from tree to tree. Broad-winged butterflies, yellow with black bars, peacock-blue with ebon spots, brown with yellow veins, some snow white, flutter hither and thither.

And whilst the senses are held in thrall by the scents and sounds and colours there bursts upon the vision the slumbering valley of the Yalu.

Far away through the hot tremulous air gleams the river; and beyond it lie the hills containing the Russian army. Eagerly we scan the distant scene, seeking some sign of the enemy. But the most powerful glasses fail to reveal movement or indication of the presence of troops. We must needs possess our souls in peace for the present. But the sight of hostile country acts like wine in the veins, and unconsciously we hurry forward.

Between the high range overlooking the Yalu valley and the low ridge facing the river, there lies a rich alluvial plain dotted with hamlets and farmhouses. A cluster of the latter, distant a couple of miles from Wiju, was allotted to foreign correspondents, who, arriving in small parties, numbered

sixteen souls in the course of a few days. Our lodgings were primitive in the extreme, one of the troubles being to choose between occupying the dwelling-houses or roughing it in the stables. The houses were warm but lively; the stables cold but airy.

Personally I have always found the night air insalubrious in the neighbourhood of houses, though pleasant enough when a roof has been out of the question. I chose a house to live in, trusting to "medicine" and to a hide that the tsetse of Africa or the tiger-like anophele of the Indian terai has never yet punctured, for immunity from attacks of the garrison. An American correspondent took the dining-room of my house, I occupied the best bedroom, and, jointly, we appropriated the kitchen. Drawing-rooms, boudoirs, libraries, etc., occupied the other sides of the quadrangle, and we might use them at any time provided we did not object to horses, pigs, or fowls.

An enormous sow lived in what might be termed the breakfast-room, for it was a nice airy chamber with lattice-work sides. The lady had a family which we were never able to number, owing to the speed with which the little rascals circled their mother when we attempted a census. The proprietor of the sow said they were thirteen, and we bought them all for two silver yen, stipulating that

half the purchase money was not to be paid until we had eaten twelve. The bargain concluded, our boys took over charge of the little swine, and proceeded to fatten them by tying them to the bars of the breakfast-room, and so preventing their anti-fat gyrations.

When six had been so treated, and the number running round the mother was appreciably less, a deputation from the other correspondents came to say that the noise from our house was causing a mutiny among the servants, and would we please fatten our little pigs some other way. We pretended not to understand what the deputation said, a plausible enough excuse, for the skirling of the six captives made verbal communications nearly impossible. Soon afterwards, however, the owner of the sow came and begged us to release the little pigs, as he was afraid the noise they were making would be prejudicial to the health of the mother. And as our prospects of sucking pig depended upon her vigour, we decided to let them loose. They were much too small to eat yet awhile, but we hoped that rations, supplementary to those furnished by the mother, would soon render them fit for the table.

Shortly after our arrival at Wiju a Japanese officer escorted us in a body to the town, and from the Castle walls we obtained a near view of the opposite side of the river. On another morning we were

taken to see certain carefully selected portions of the Japanese lines, but that which I most wished to see, the positions of the artillery, was not revealed to us. We were very keen to know at what point it was contemplated to cross the river and attack the formidable defences of the Russians. The disposition of the howitzers would be a sure indication of this, and I was therefore very anxious to know what had become of them. What we had seen was suggestive, and I made up my mind where to look if opportunity offered.

Twice within the next few days I rode in a certain direction, once on the road, and the other time across country. On each occasion, however, the watchful sentries ordered me back. But a lucky chance gave me my wish.

Strolling round the camp one evening I saw a batch of mafoos trying to catch a loose pony. It was a cunning little brute, and evaded all efforts at capture. Its owner had a big Australian standing near, and, hatless and coatless, I scrambled upon him, barebacked, with only the head-rope through his mouth, to help chase the truant. The pony thought this grand sport, and enlarged his sphere of operations until we were some distance from camp—and not far from where I had been stopped by the sentries.

After a good deal of manœuvring I got the pony

galloping in the desired direction, and, cantering close behind, I took good care he did not head backward. In my shirt-sleeves, and without saddle or bridle, it was obvious that I was a *bonâ fide* catcher of the loose animal, and when the pair of us dashed down the road the sentry turned out the guard, not to stop me, but to catch the runaway.

But the guard scattered like chaff before us, and the excited pony tore along the road straight for the river bank. There was a tremendous shouting from the rear. In front was a camp, and about 200 soldiers turned out to see the fun. They formed up across the road, but the pony put his head down and his heels up, and with a squeal, cleared the bank and went off at right angles. I was after him quick enough, and soon had him going for the river again. Eventually we got through everything, and I saw what I wanted. All the howitzers were comfortably ensconced under a ridge close to the river bank, and a great park of guns and wagons was not far off. Evidently the greater part of the artillery of the two divisions was disposed around Wiju, clearly intimating the intentions of the Japanese.

When returning down the road, hauling the unwilling pony behind me, I got a good deal of undeserved sympathy. Sure enough I was sweaty and muddy. But I knew where the guns were.

Still, it is a delicate matter dealing with a Japanese

sentry, particularly when he has orders to be on the alert, when I believe he'd shoot the Mikado if His Majesty weren't quick with the password. I was riding over to camp from Headquarters one night with another correspondent—he wearing his arm-band, but I without mine owing to the exigency of the wash-tub. On the way there was a bridge to cross, and just as our horses were about to step upon it there came a shout, and several dark figures emerged from under the arches on the other side. We were prompt to halt.

A shadow remained on each side of the bridge, whilst a third came towards us with great caution, stepping like a pugilist looking for an opening. There was a moon, and as the figure advanced we could see it was a long-coated sentry holding his rifle at the ready, the light flickering along the fixed bayonet like moonbeams on rippling water.

I let the man with the arm-band go first, and when he demonstrated his innocence, and was allowed to move on, my pony stepped briskly forward—until I gripped him hard by the head, conscious that the point of the glimmering shaft of light was nicely steadied in my leg. If I drew back suddenly and yelled, as was my impulse, it meant bullets from the figures beyond; and if I tried to push the bayonet away I would get it in Little Mary without more ado.

So I bore it, and said, with murder in my heart, "Shimbun!—LONDON TIMES SHIMBUN!!"

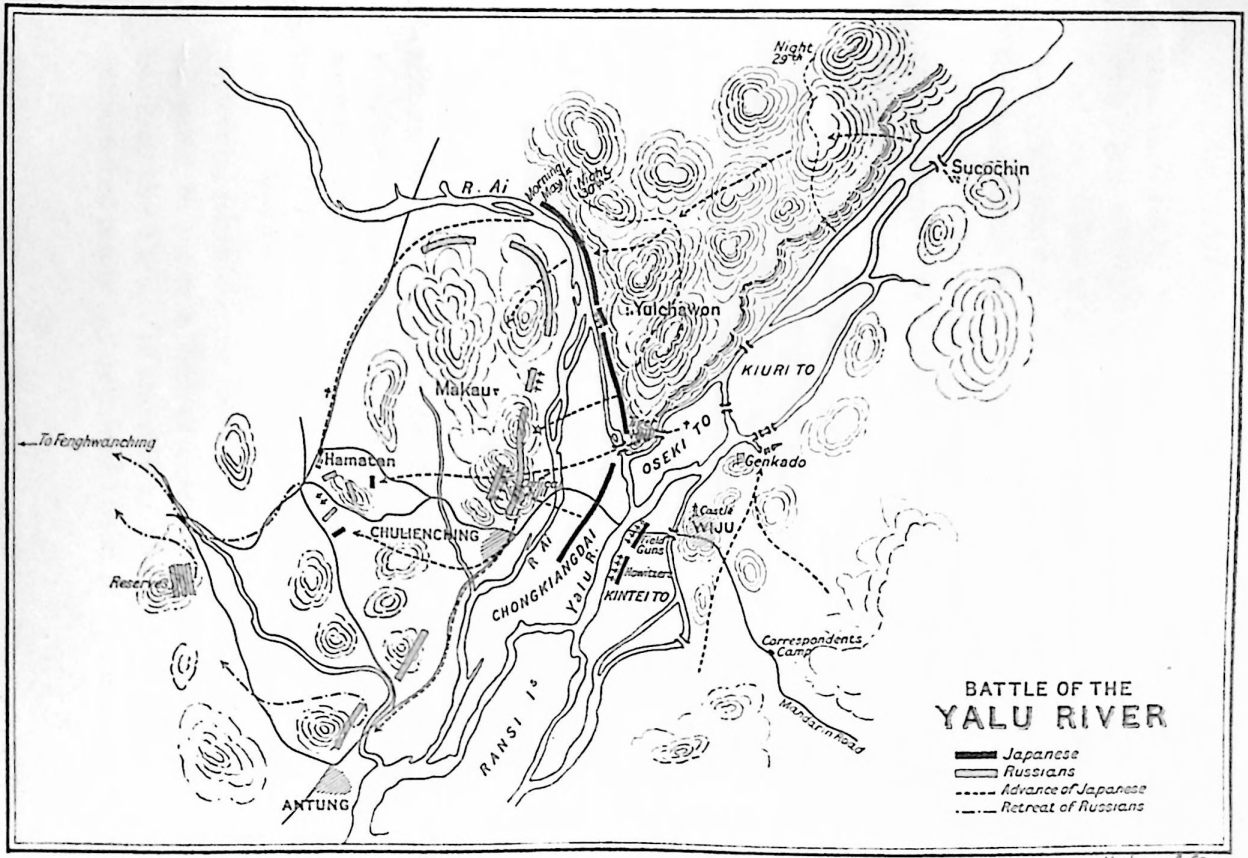
These are magic words to the Japanese soldier, and at once my pony's hoofs were thundering across the wooden bridge in pursuit of my companion.

The name of the journal which I represented is a household word in Japan, doubtless owing to its chronic excellence. But it was a long time before I understood why so many of the soldiers who spelt the letters on my arm-band "Ti-mess Lon-ton" should ask me if I was the Editor, and when I replied in the negative should cease to take any further interest in me. Mentioning the matter to a Japanese officer one day, he said it was common belief in Japan that ambitious young men in England aspired to become either Editor of *The Times* or Prime Minister. Evidently my interlocutors by the road regarded me as having failed in life, for there was nothing in their manner to show that they suspected me of being Prime Minister.

CHAPTER VII

PRELIMINARIES AT THE YALU

THE conformation of the bed of the Yalu in many respects simplifies the transit of the actual river. There is no broad, deep current, the bridging of which, in face of an enemy, would be next door to an impossibility. Yet the numerous streams by which the bed is intersected multiply minor difficulties in an infinite manner. Roughly speaking, the bed of the river between Wiju and Chulienching, the points at which the Mandarin Road crosses, is occupied by two long low islands, Chong Kiangdai and Kintei, which have the effect of splitting the river into three streams. The stream on the right bank further up the river bed is rejoined by part of one of the other streams, the two forming the Ai River, which is fordable or not at various places, according to the volume of water. The other two streams are several hundred yards in width, unfordable and swift. Where the Ai joins the Yalu, a few hundred yards above Wiju, the mountainous country dividing the two rivers culmin-


Night 29th
Sucochin
R. Ai
Morning May 1st
Night May 1st
Yulchavon
KIURI TO
Makaur
OSEKI TO
To Fenghwancheng
Hamacan
Genkado
Castle
WIJU
CHULIENCHING
Field Guns
Howitzers
R. Ai
CHONGKIANGDAI
Yalu R.
KINTEI TO
Reserves
Correspondents Camp
Mandarin Road
RANSI Is
ANTUNG
BATTLE OF THE
YALU RIVER
Japanese
Russians
Advance of Japanese
Retreat of Russians
Methuen & Co.

ates in a rocky promontory known as Tiger Hill, which juts into the river bed and reduces its breadth from two miles to one. Above Tiger Hill the river bed again expands and is occupied by islands similar in character to those below.

The ground on the right bank of the river differs entirely from that on the left. A very low ridge flanks the left bank, no point exceeding two hundred feet in height. Parallel ridges, slightly higher, occupy the immediate rear, followed by a plain, and then are encountered the mountains which are characteristic of the interior of Korea. The right bank, however, is practically formed by mountains, the lower slopes and ridges of which rise almost straight from the river bed. The Russian side of the river, therefore, offered facilities for defence which suggest comparison to the position on the Tugela held by the Boers. Principal of those facilities was Tiger Hill and its approaches. Occupied by the Russians it commanded above and below the sandy plain of the river bed, offering gun positions which, whilst being secure from the guns of the enemy, rendered it impossible for that enemy to effect a crossing within range.

Several reasons exist for a belief that the Russians intended to make a serious defence of the northern bank of the Yalu. In the rear of Chulienching they constructed roads and repaired others in a permanent

manner. They built most extensive earthworks over a front of thirteen miles and accumulated a great quantity of supplies in their immediate rear. And General Kuropatkin, in the midst of the Herculean task of setting the Russian military house in order, found time, on 25th April, to visit Chulienching and inspect the positions taken up.

What, then, were those positions, and in what manner were they protected from attack?

To the immediate left of Chulienching stands a conical hill some two hundred and fifty feet high, the outpost of a spur that runs down to the river bed from the mountains in rear. From the valleys behind the Russians constructed a road running along the ridge of the spur and terminating on Conical Hill. Upon the ridge they placed two batteries of artillery, eight guns on Conical Hill, and four at each of two other points. At Antung, six miles down the river, was stationed another battery. At Makau, two miles north of Chulienching, two more batteries occupied a position overlooking the Ai. Thus forty guns were distributed along a line of eight miles and commanding a front of about fourteen miles. It is noteworthy that the nature of the country and the paucity of roads made it a physical impossibility to concentrate the batteries at anything like short notice. No precautions were taken to conceal the guns; the spokes of the wheels, the gunners and their every movement

being plainly discernible with glasses from the Korean bank. Inspecting the emplacements after the Russian retirement, it was noticeable that no pains had been taken to protect the gunners, the low walls flanking the guns being of little value as shelter from opposing fire.

On every hill and eminence facing the river along the Russian front, Chinese labourers had been engaged for weeks in constructing earthworks and trenches for riflemen. A prodigious amount of energy was expended upon those preparations, with a result rather pitiful to behold for those of us who had seen in South Africa what experience had taught was the trenching essential for protection from high-angle artillery fire. Nor had any attempt been made to conceal the trenches, each one of which could be plainly seen from the Japanese side of the river.

A study of the preliminary movements of the Japanese army makes it pretty clear that they intended from the outset to repeat the tactics by which they crossed the Yalu during the war with China in 1894. Early in April a detachment of the 12th Division left the main line of advance, and from Anju marched north-east to Chonson, a village on the Yalu some forty miles above Wiju. The army, on nearing Wiju, deployed, the 2nd Division forming the left, the Guards the centre, and the Twelfth the right. The Second sent a strong detach-

ment to Yongampo, forty miles down the river, the division itself being spread out between Wiju and a creek twenty miles below. The Guards occupied the town of Wiju, and the Twelfth the country between it and Sucochin, six miles above. Altogether, then, from the flanking party on the far right to Yongampo at the mouth of the river, the Japanese were responsible for a front of eighty miles.

Two features of these dispositions were significant. The fact that the 12th Division, the one composed of hill-men and furnished with mountain artillery, was placed near Sucochin, the scene of the crossing of the Yalu in 1894, suggests that it was designed weeks before, perhaps months, to operate in the wildly broken ground lying between the Ai and Yalu rivers. Then the distribution of the 2nd Division over so long a line pointed to the desire of the Japanese to demonstrate the presence of a large number of men in the lower reaches of the river. In the light of subsequent events it is clear that the Japanese all along intended to feint far below Wiju and to effect a lodgment on the opposite bank from Sucochin, thus following the plan which had succeeded against the Chinese. Whether the Russian staff knew, or not, how the Japanese had crossed in 1894, they were strangely indifferent to moves that ought to have been highly significant

to people acquainted with the history of the campaign of ten years ago.

By April 25th the Japanese plans were complete. Painstaking yet daring reconnoitring had revealed every fordable place in the nearer streams, every point of which advantage might be taken. An alert and carefully organised intelligence department had discovered the exact disposition of the enemy's forces. Gun positions were selected, concentration movements set afoot, and it now only remained for men and batteries to take up the positions assigned to them. Many of those places, however, had yet to be won. That they were wrested from the enemy so easily is extraordinary; why the Russians permitted the Japanese to occupy the key to their position is inexplicable; why, indeed, the Russians themselves did not fortify and occupy in force Tiger Hill and its approaches is past comprehension. Anyhow, its possession was essential to Japanese plans, a fact which should have been apparent to the Russians, had their intelligence department and tactical ability been on a par with those of the Japanese.

On the 26th, 27th, and 28th April the Japanese, in succession, drove the Russian outposts from the island adjoining Wiju and the three islands immediately above Tiger Hill. These operations were carried out at small cost and reflect great credit on the

men engaged. Cases of individual bravery were numerous, many swimming the icy streams in the darkness, several losing their lives by drowning. Once in possession of the islands and free from rifle fire, the building of bridges at night became a comparatively simple task. Eventually no fewer than ten bridges were built, several screened from the enemy's sight by trees, but two, at least, visible. Curiously enough the Russians made no serious attempt to destroy these bridges, though on several occasions they subjected them to shrapnel fire.

So far the Japanese had given no definite indication of their plans to the Russians. The apparently desultory bridge-building in the neighbourhood of Wiju had been interpreted by the enemy as a blind to cover movements elsewhere. Down the river a Japanese battery had been busy, and large numbers of men had appeared on eminences. Junks had been collected in great numbers in the lower reaches of the river, whilst at Yungampo the presence of shallow-draft gunboats, torpedo destroyers, and armed vessels had all contributed to the idea that a crossing was designed to take place far below Wiju. To further that idea the Japanese guns, which all along, practically, had been concentrated in rear of Wiju, were sedulously silent. No movements were visible on the Wiju roads, which had been completely screened from observation. No sightseers occupied

SCREENING T[illegible] NEAR WIJU

the hilltops around Wiju—it was a feature of the Russian front that every point of vantage was occupied during the day by groups of soldiers enjoying the sun and the view. In fact, all around Wiju was quiescent, whilst lower down the river all was life and movement, symptoms, according to Russian simplicity, of military activity.

On 29th April, however, it appeared as if the Russians began to suspect something. They evacuated the island adjoining Chulienching, after setting fire to many of the houses which occupied it, including the headquarters of the Russian Timber Concession Company. Their outposts on Tiger Hill were reinforced by a battalion of infantry, two squadrons of Cossacks, and several guns. As these in comparatively close order crossed the sandy stretches which divide Chulienching from Tiger Hill they offered a tempting mark to the Japanese artillery, but in adherence to the plan of concealment, the Russians were allowed to advance without challenge.

Meanwhile the detachment at Chonson had vacated its position and was marching hot-foot towards Sucochin. Here, on the 29th, the whole of the 12th Division was concentrated behind a ridge which sheltered it from view. At midday the Japanese suddenly made a sign. An army marching long distances through a country like Korea is not likely

to be overburdened with pontoons. Days before the sight of pontoon trains far below Wiju had assured the Russians that a crossing was to be attempted down the river. But now there appeared streaming towards the river bank at Sucochin a long string of pack-horses bearing the white-painted iron compartments that indicate a bridge of boats *in posse*. No sooner had the head of the train reached the water than the pontoons were hurriedly put together, launched, and manned by parties of soldiers who vigorously paddled for the opposite bank.

A Russian outpost saluted them with a volley, which brought into action a Japanese battery covering the crossing. The Russians fled without further ado, and the ferrying party landed on the island, which they traversed quickly, and then forded the other branch of the river. Protected from rifle fire from the further bank, the Japanese engineers now proceeded to throw a pontoon bridge across the river. This was no easy task, however, for the stream was fast and deep, and the anchors holding the pontoons dragged. Additional anchors were improvised. Then timber ran short, and balks had to be cut from neighbouring trees. After eight hours' incessant labour by the sappers the bridge was completed, and the troops commenced the passage. That night the whole of the infantry of the 12th Division crossed the Yalu. On reaching the further bank

they extended to the north and then wheeled left and advanced to their bivouac for the night. Their position consisted of a line some three miles long lying at right angles to the river and facing south-west.

In the neighbourhood of Wiju matters were fast coming to a head. The Russian reinforcements for Tiger Hill commenced to make their presence felt by long range rifle fire on the Japanese on the island of Oseki, whilst their artillery interested itself in the bridge-building. The rifle fire directed from Oseki suddenly increased greatly and, searching the scene with my glasses, I was astonished to observe about three companies of Russian infantry clambering upon the face of the precipitous bluffs east of Tiger Hill neck. They were evidently trying to reach points from which they could fire upon the Japanese with more advantage.

Hitherto the Japanese guns had remained silent. Numerous opportunities had been offered for the employment of artillery, and the fact that these were let slip evidently satisfied the Russians that the Japanese had no guns near Wiju. Only on that hypothesis is it possible to explain why a considerable body of men should have ventured into a position in full view of the enemy's lines, 3,000 yards distant, and from which, in the event of attack,

there was no escape save but by slow and laborious climbing.

The moment was one of consuming interest. I lay opposite Tiger Hill on a high knoll overlooking the river, and so commanded a perfect view of the situation. Two hundred yards to my left, under shadow of the walls of Wiju Castle, the guns of a battery were ranged, their muzzles just showing over a bank of carefully turfed earth. Under the walls the gunners were grouped. Three hundred yards to my right was another battery also in action, the gun crews lying handy in rear. The increased volume of fire from the opposite hills had attracted the attention of the officers, and through telescopes they were eagerly watching the movements of the Russian riflemen. They had applied for permission to open upon the enemy, and were anxiously waiting a reply from headquarters. Guns, ammunition, and men were ready.

Suddenly the order came—a husky, savage call that broke the silence and made the heart leap. There was a rush from the Castle walls, the gun captains repeated the call, and ere its echo had died away two guns had belched livid flames, two deafening roars had shaken the hills, and two iron shells were screaming through the air.

Against the dark hillside opposite the twinkle and the white smoke of the exploding shells were clearly

visible. The shrieking shrapnel could not be heard, but it had the effect of a thunderbolt upon the unsuspecting Russians. They scattered wildly. Again the guns spoke, and again, and again. They were aimed with deadly accuracy; every shot took toll of the scrambling figures on the distant slopes. Then the battery on my right joined in the attack and swept the unfortunate Russians with a storm of scathing lead.

The attack had commenced and developed in a matter of seconds. Whilst the echoes of the opening guns were still rolling in the distance the Russian artillery came into action, the guns from Conical Hill pouring a heavy fire upon the battery on my left, those from Tiger Hill responding to the battery on the right. The gunners at Wiju retired for shelter to the Castle walls, the other battery turned its attention to the guns that were assailing it. A fierce contest took place, in which the Wiju battery joined, the two speedily silencing the Russians on Tiger Hill neck. The guns from Conical Hill fired wildly at one and then at the other of the attacking batteries, their desultory and inaccurate efforts being in remarkable contrast to the concentration and accuracy of the Japanese shooting. Darkness now intervened and operations ceased for the day.

On the night of 29th April important steps were taken by the Japanese in their passage across the

Yalu. Two things were essential to their plans—one, the possession of Tiger Hill and its approaches; the other, the rendering ineffective of the Russian gun position at Chulienching. The first of these was provided for by the landing of the 12th Division at a point whence, during the ensuing day, they inevitably must drive the slender force in occupation from the position requisite to the contemplated movements. The second essential was dealt with in a bold yet astute manner, which argues a perfect knowledge of the Russian facilities for inaugurating a counter attack, and at the same time proves that the time spent upon the study of gunnery by the Japanese officers had not been wasted. Batteries of howitzers and field guns, during the night, crossed by one of the bridges and occupied a position on the island of Kintei adjoining Wiju. This position directly faced Conical Hill, from which it was distant some 3,000 yards. The nature of the position was of material importance to the idea which instigated this particular part of the general plan of attack.

Running parallel to the river bed and at right angles to a line drawn from Conical Hill, there stretched a belt of trees completely clothed in vivid green foliage. Scattered trees occupied front and rear. Throughout this part of the island the ground was covered with bushes. The Japanese added density to this leafy screen by erecting poles to

which they tied branches, by uprooting bushes and replanting them, by adding leafy boughs to gaps, simulating nature so artfully that at a distance the difference was indistinguishable. Behind this screen their guns were emplaced in deep pits from which only the muzzles projected. Elaborate protective casemates were constructed for the gunners to enable them to work with a minimum of exposure.

Before proceeding with the narrative of the operations it is necessary to consider what the Japanese position was on the night of 29th April. A whole division was separated from the main body by a broad river, spanned by a slender bridge which an enterprising enemy might demolish with a single blow. A large number of guns were isolated in exactly the same manner. Both were liable to be cut off by the enemy. The question arises, did the Japanese lay themselves open to disaster?

Disaster was possible only if the Russians were capable of initiating a comprehensive counter movement. But it was absolutely within the knowledge of the Japanese Intelligence Department that no counter attack was contemplated, and that the Russians did not possess the means of making one. Yet, to make assurance doubly sure, they took ample precautions in case the enemy suddenly developed activity. Batteries were established on the southern bank of the river to protect the guns on the island, and

other batteries covered the point where the 12th Division had crossed. Two divisions were massed at Wiju ready to be employed to meet any emergency. Under no circumstances could the guns on the island have been captured, for they were separated from the Russians by the main stream of the river, which all night through was strongly guarded. Any attempt by the Russians to cross in the night would have been instantly foiled by the throwing of infantry upon the point attacked. In daylight the covering guns, and the isolated guns themselves, made any attack impossible. So far as the 12th Division was concerned, the mountains in front made a night attack impracticable. Any demonstration on the part of the Russians in the early morning could have been met by a retirement upon the river bank opposite which the Japanese guns were stationed. Besides, the 12th Division was accompanied by six batteries of mountain guns, than which heavier artillery could not be brought to bear owing to the nature of the country. It is conceivable that the Twelfth might have been placed in an awkward position were the Japanese army faced by an enemy equal in strength and activity. But the information of the Japanese with regard to the Russian force was such as to render it practically impossible that an attack could have been effective.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF THE YALU

THE problem which the Japanese army had to solve was no insignificant one, nor was it a problem in which a few simple factors combined to form an obstacle merely more or less hard to surmount. Beyond the tactical and strategetical necessity to effect a crossing of the Yalu, there lay the imperative political need of achieving the desired object in such a manner as would inspire all Japan with faith in her troops, and all the world with confidence that Japan had not appealed to the arbitrament of arms without a perfect consciousness that her comprehension of the science of war would go far to compensate for her inferiority in numbers and resources as compared with her formidable antagonist. Whilst General Kuroki and his staff must have spent many anxious hours in preparation of their plans, the statesmen who direct affairs in Tokio could never have lost sight of the fact that a check upon the Yalu, or even a slovenly victory, would not avail Japan when the necessity arose, as it has already

arisen, to appeal to the outside world for financial accommodation. Not the least part of General Kuroki's task was the duty of demonstrating to the ally of Japan, and to that other country allied in sentiment if not in name, that his troops, and, above all, the military methods of his army were such as to justify Great Britain in her belief in the value of Japan as an ally, and to convince the United States that if necessity arose Japan was worthy of support. How General Kuroki and his staff performed that duty is now known to the world. And in what degree the Japanese victory was due to good fortune, and in what degree to sheer superiority in military science, the reader can decide for himself.

All observers, friendly and otherwise, of Japanese emancipation from mediævalism, have agreed that in two important respects Japan, from a military point of view, had yet to satisfy the Western world that her progress was as great as it appeared to be. The superiority of the Occidental over the Oriental in military prowess has been settled again and again. It therefore remained to be seen if Japan was to prove an exception to other Eastern nations. Would the morale of the Japanese soldier continue undiminished at the point of the bayonet handled by the physically superior, contemptuous Russian? Again, Japan had learned her military lesson to perfection; her organisation was acknowledged to be

the equal, if not the superior, of any in the world; her arms were absolutely modern, her methods based upon the very latest experience in war. But it remained to be seen if Japan was capable of applying what she had so speedily acquired to the desperate exigency of the battlefield.

At daybreak on the morning of April 30th the scene viewed from the top of a hill behind Wiju formed a strange contrast. At our feet the valley and every depression were alive with men and horses. Transport trains, strings of ammunition wagons, ambulance carts, all the paraphernalia of a marching army were huddled up into a space which the eye could cover at a glance, and yet so near that every figure, every movement, almost the expression on the faces, might be discerned. The very voices could be distinguished. The whinnying of many horses floated towards us, the air was filled with the rattling of wheels, the jingle of bit and bridle, the clank of scabbard, as cavalrymen gathered hither and thither. The ridges immediately beyond were lined with cannon, built up and trenched for the protection of the black masses of soldiers which lay upon the slopes awaiting the word to take their places.

Raising the eyes but a trifle to clear the ridge in front, everything was changed. The sandy bed of the Yalu stretched right and left as far as the gaze could reach. The blue streams into which the river

is divided sparkled in the brilliant sunshine as they meandered along the yellow, green-dotted plain of the great valley. Beyond, in endless vista, were piled up the purple mountains of Manchuria, scarred and serrated in the heights, wooded in the ravines, softly clad in dull green where the nearer hills sloped towards the river bed. And over all was spread a sky which Italy might envy. Exquisitely peaceful though the Manchurian landscape appeared, it was impossible to forget that human endeavour was afoot within it intent upon the spilling of blood, hungry for the victory that must bring disillusionment and awakening to a great nation.

With the advance of day the obscurity which earlier had shrouded the lower slopes of the Manchurian Mountains disappeared, and soon it became possible to descry men advancing over almost every one of the spurs thrown out by the great central rising in the rear. These were the men of the 12th Division which had crossed the river the night before, and were now pushing their way through the maze of rock and ravine that separated them from Tiger Hill and the heights overlooking the Ai River. Far away to the north-east, and close to the river's edge, they could be seen in companies marching in single file along a bridle-path. The course of the path could be traced for miles in and out of the valleys, twisting around ravines, evading

projecting spurs, but always ascending towards the summits of the main ridges. Almost every yard of it was occupied by strings of soldiers toiling under their burthen of accoutrements and ammunition, but ever mounting upward.

Suddenly from somewhere opposite came the boom of a gun. It was followed quickly by another. Then could be seen, sharp against the dark mountain-side, two little white expanding clouds. And then came the detonations of the exploding shrapnel. From the Japanese battery occupying the ridge immediately in front came quick harsh cries, there was a scramble of men to the guns, a succession of streaming yellow flames, and then the loud roar of cannon reverberated through the valley. The Russians had opened fire from Tiger Hill neck upon a party of the Twelfth; the Japanese gunners had sprung to the support of their comrades.

The Battle of the Yalu had begun.

The battery which had opened upon the Russians was speedily joined by another, and the two poured a heavy fire upon the enemy's position and speedily silenced the guns. Meanwhile the Russian batteries at Chulienching opened fire upon the two Japanese batteries in action. The latter, having driven the Russians out of their position near Tiger Hill, were now devoting their attention to the neck and approaches, subjecting them to a searching shrapnel

fire. The advance parties of the 12th Division had by this time come into contact with the Russian scouts, and the sound of a heavy musketry fusillade came from behind the nearer hills. It must not be forgotten that the advance of the Twelfth was not confined to the line visible to the eye. Similar lines covering a front of three miles were marching parallel over the inner hills, which could not be seen from Wiju.

Meanwhile a terrible and dramatic feature of the day was pending—the artillery duel between the Russians on Conical Hill and the guns concealed on the island of Kintei. In the innocent-looking gem of nature, described in the previous chapter, lay five howitzer batteries (twenty guns) and six field batteries (thirty-six guns) awaiting the order to open fire. The secrecy with which they had been moved into position, the skill with which they had been hidden, and the advantage which had been taken of the peculiar powers of the howitzer in throwing projectiles at a high angle, entitle the Japanese to be considered the authors of one of the craftiest moves that have taken place in warfare since the introduction of modern ordnance.

So far, it is certain, the Russians were completely ignorant of the fact that the Japanese were possessed of heavy guns. In fact, officers amongst the Russian prisoners said it greatly surprised them to find that

their opponents had been able to bring up even field guns. It had been their opinion that the Korean roads precluded the possibility of the Japanese having artillery of any heavier calibre than mountain guns. That opinion throws some light upon Russian ideas as compared with Japanese. Where the one had concluded the country impassable to field artillery, the other had repaired the roads and transported not only field guns, but the much more weighty howitzers.

Judge then of the consternation of the Russians when their positions were assailed by heavy guns. They must have been thunderstruck, not only at the weight of the guns, but that they should occupy a position under their very noses. Overpowering was the almost simultaneous outburst from the many batteries, both howitzer and field, which suddenly commenced to bombard the Russian batteries upon Conical Hill. Instantly the Russian cannon swung round to reply to the unexpected attack. Their shrapnel tore through the unoffending trees and bushes searching for the engines of destruction which threatened their existence. The spacious valley of the Yalu was filled with one continuous deep roar, which, imprisoned by the lofty mountains on either side, rolled backward and forward through the vibrating air. The atmosphere over the Japanese position was clouded by the white smoke from the bursting

shells, the flashes from the explosions played like summer lightning, and everywhere the ground was obscured by the dust from the showering bullets. The more distant effect on Conical Hill was no less impressive. The common shell employed by the Japanese dispersed great clouds of grey-black smoke that hung like evil spirits over the unhappy Russians. No spot was left untouched by the flying splinters; every shell burst with deadly effect; none failed in its mission. The fire of the Japanese gunners was accurate and regular. There was no haste, no erratic aiming. Steady, concentrated fire was the order, and it was carried out to the letter.

The result was never in doubt. The trees screened the flashing of the Japanese guns from the Russian eyes. There was no smoke to indicate their whereabouts. The indirect fire of the howitzers was as deadly as if it had been aimed point-blank. The Russians, on the other hand, fired at random into the belt of trees; they had been able to locate only two of the Japanese guns. Their fire had little or no effect upon the well-protected Japanese gunners. In ten minutes the Russian shooting grew wild. Their reserve gunners had been called up and were being slaughtered at their posts. In a few more minutes several of their guns ceased firing. After twenty-five minutes both batteries were completely silenced. An effort was made to bring up horses to withdraw

the guns. It was defeated by a fresh outburst from the Japanese guns.

The Russian guns beaten, the Japanese attention was turned to the Russian camp and picket lines. Early in the occupation of the southern bank of the Yalu a reconnoitring party with powerful telescopes had discerned, through an opening in the hills, the formation of the Russian camp and the location of their horses. This valuable information was carefully treasured, carefully confirmed day by day. The Japanese themselves screened every movement at even greater distances. Not so the Russians, who throughout the operations made no effort to conceal their presence. Their combined temerity and ignorance of modern tactics cost them dear.

The storm which had burst over Conical Hill fell, in turn, upon the Russian lines. The Japanese gunners saw nothing but the green trees in front of them, yet every shell directed against a position exactly ascertained beforehand took effect. The camp was busy attending to the wounded gunners. Preparations were on foot for retirement from a spot rendered untenable by the unexpected display of Japanese strength. The gun horses occupied the picket lines. Into the animated, already distracted lines plunged the great shells, bursting with loud detonations into thousands of iron splinters that killed, wounded, destroyed. The horses, terror-

stricken, broke away from their fastenings and galloped madly about. Wounded men were struck again and again. Uninjured men tried to carry their fallen comrades to shelter, and fell themselves. Horses were disembowelled, men were torn to pieces, the ground pitted with deep holes from which the fiercely scattered earth and stones blinded and struck down all round. The Japanese fire did not last long. The Russian camp was ruined, the horses killed or dispersed.

The tale for the day was complete; firing ceased. In one short hour the Japanese had inflicted a crushing blow upon Russian hopes. There was no longer any possibility of a successful or even a protracted defence of the Yalu. Before such artillery the Russians must retire, and immediately. Reinforcements were out of the question.

That afternoon the 12th Division completed its march over the hills in rear of Tiger Hill, driving a small Russian force across the Ai River. In the evening the Guards and 2nd Divisions crossed from the southern bank of the river to the island adjoining Tiger Hill, and rested awhile under the lee of the promontory, within half an hour's march of the main Russian position. The howitzers remained in their original places, but the field guns were moved to a point east of the Ai, where they commanded the northern part of the Russian line.

The Russians, slow to realise the seriousness of their position, made leisurely preparations for retirement. Their guns were withdrawn under cover of darkness to the rear of Conical Hill. That night the Japanese officers made an extensive examination of the Ai River, which remained to be crossed before the Russian position could be stormed. Reconnoitring parties took stock of the Russian line in the moonlight, and every preparation was made to follow up on the morrow the advantage gained during the day.

Before describing the events of 1st May, the location of the Russian troops as afterwards discovered may be indicated. Their front, extending from Antung to Chulienching, continued along the ridges overlooking the Ai. At Antung a regiment was stationed; at Chulienching a regiment and a half; along the Ai front another regiment, two companies on the extreme left completing the line. In reserve at Hamatan were three regiments and a battery. Three regiments of cavalry were split up along the line, the major portion at Chulienching, a fact which contributed to the slaughter of horses on the previous day. The Russian gun positions have been described already. The question of numbers is a difficult one to decide. The majority of East Siberian regiments are composed of two battalions instead of four, as in the regular Russian

army. In the present case it is certain that some of the regiments consisted of three battalions. It seems reasonably clear, however, that 3,000 men were stationed at Antung, 5,000 at Chulienching, 3,000 facing the Ai, and any number between 3,000 and 5,000 in reserve at Hamatan. On paper the Russian army probably numbered 20,000 men. It must have been considerably reduced, however, by detachments despatched up and down the Yalu. A thousand men were at the mouth of the river opposite Yongampo, and we know that bodies crossed the Yalu and entered Korea far above Wiju, presumably all belonging to the force under the command of General Sassulitch. Coming to the numbers actually engaged on 1st May, there have to be left out the force at Antung and the reserves at Hamatan, none of which fired a shot. There remain the 5,000 at Chulienching and 3,000 on the Ai front. Taking into consideration the disaster of the previous day, the fact that 800 wounded were carried away in the early morning—a number quite beyond the ability of the medical staff to deal with—the difference between effectives in the field and the paper numbers, the necessity of retiring the guns which were more or less horseless, and the losses during the operations, it hardly appears possible that the Russian firing line could have contained more than 4,000 rifles. This line, extending from Chulienching up the Ai,

measured about five miles, in which were many gaps. The strength was centred at Chulienching, and tailed away until the extreme left was defended by only a small body. At Hamatan, a few miles in rear of Chulienching, roads from Antung and the Russian left join the Mandarin Road from Chulienching. On the heights beyond the junction were placed the reserves.

In the small hours of the morning of 1st May all three divisions of the Japanese army left their bivouacs and advanced to take up position for the impending attack. The Guards and 2nd Divisions crossed from Oseki to Tiger Hill, and then proceeded to ford the eastern branch of the Ai, which is here divided into two streams. The water crossed, both divisions found themselves on the island of Chong Kiang-dai, where they deployed, the Second fronting Chulienching and Conical Hill, the Guards facing the heavily entrenched ridges immediately north. Simultaneously the Twelfth debouched from the ravines flanking Yulchawon and advanced into the sandy bed of the Ai.

At break of day the infantry of the three divisions formed a long line facing the bluffs occupied by the Russians, a distance of some 2,000 metres separating the opposing forces. The ground intervening was a plain of bright yellow sand, upon which every dark speck was plainly visible. The prospect of

marching up to the Russian rifles over a space without a vestige of cover was not desirable, nor did it make the Japanese task any more agreeable that the Ai, broad and swift, had to be forded in full view of the enemy's trenches eight hundred yards distant.

At seven o'clock the howitzers on Kintei and the field batteries at Yulchawon commenced a steady and systematic search of the ridges occupied by the Russians. For nearly an hour a terrific bombardment swept the enemy's positions, the trenches proving small protection from the murderous fire poured upon them by over a hundred guns. The wounded lay where they fell, and were done to death by the plunging fire of the howitzers. The field guns at Yulchawon enfiladed great portions of the Russian line and added to the destruction. A Russian battery at Makau came into action, but immediately was forced to retire. Two guns got away, but as the remainder came into view for a moment, when retreating, a well-aimed Japanese shell crashed into the limber of the leading gun, exploded the ammunition and wrecked the carriage. The five guns following were completely blocked, and ere they could be extricated from the confusion a perfect storm of shell destroyed the men and horses in charge. From Conical Hill there came no response to the challenge; the batteries that had

been so cruelly used the day before had been withdrawn in the night.

At eight o'clock the Japanese fire ceased, and the word was passed to the divisions to advance to the attack. Simultaneously they opened up and struck out across the broad expanse of river bed in long open lines, every man clearly silhouetted against the yellow sand. The fatuity of dark-coloured uniforms was realised by every onlooker; each soldier might have been a moving bull's-eye, so clearly did he show against the light-coloured ground. The Russian fire was withheld until the advanced lines were distant some 1,200 yards. Then there burst out from every slope and ridge a rifle fire that ranted and roared backward and forward along the valley in short, broken, leaping waves of sound. The leading line halted, dropped to pieces and disappeared, the second line gathering up the fragments as it swept forward. The second line suffered in almost like manner, and a general halt took place.

Again the Japanese artillery awoke the echoes. Upon the Russian riflemen was directed a withering stream of shell and shrapnel, which quickly took the vim out of the rifle fire. Under cover of the lull the Japanese infantry resumed the advance, and the leading lines disappeared from view into the depression where flowed the Ai. Then the rifle fire

was renewed, the guns again lashed the opposing heights in deep-voiced anger, whilst men fording the river were wounded and drowned by the score. The Ai claimed but toll. The Japanese in thousands re-appeared, re-formed, advanced, swung back to their original direction, which had been deflected by the river, went on again, invading in converging lines the ascents leading to the enemy's positions.

So much was perceived from Wiju of the attack by the 2nd and Guards Divisions on the Chulien-ching positions. Whilst they advanced the 12th Division, out of sight on the right, made similar progress. Simultaneously all three divisions fixed bayonets and stormed the heights, preceded by a heavy concentrated fire from all the Japanese guns. The Russian line was completely shaken by the ruthless cannonading to which it had been repeatedly subjected. Overwhelming numbers were swarming up the hillsides to enforce with cold steel what shot and shell had not been able to effect.

The Russians retired, beaten, but not disgraced. They had made a great fight under a disastrous fire that would have shaken any troops in the world. Against proper entrenchments that fire would not have inflicted one-tenth of the damage it did on the defenders. Our South African antagonists would have laughed at it from security, and hurled the invader back with fire reserved until the colour of

his eyes was perceptible. Mayhap though the Japanese, more regardless of life than we Anglo-Saxons, would not be denied in such circumstances, would not be turned from their purpose by mere slaughter in their ranks. A proportion would arrive within thrusting distance, and then who knows what would be the effect of the razor-sharp points and edges of their bayonets?

At nine o'clock the Japanese were in possession of the Russian position all along the line, and the national flag, white, with a blood-red spot in its midst, floated triumphantly upon the eminences. But there had been a cruel episode. The attackers, on the point of final success, were massed in a depression near the top of a ridge occupied by the Russians, waiting for one last slashing with fire from the supporting guns. Just where they darkened the hillside like a cluster of bees two ugly volcano-like clouds suddenly appeared. These swelled out ominously, obscured the spot, merged into one another, and floated slowly by on the wind, leaving two black patches of prostrate human figures in the centre of a space from which all unhurt had wildly fled. Two shells from the howitzers had missed their mark, and found friends instead of foes. The mistake cost Japan a score of lives.

The Russian position won, the reserves of the three divisions were employed against the retreating

enemy. Those of the 12th Division, already far on the left flank of the enemy, pushed farther out, and then swung inward toward the Mandarin Road. The reserves of the Second dashed through the village of Chulienching and round to the right over the hills and valleys. The Guard reserves, more deliberate, afraid of precipitating the flight of the Russians, followed them near the main road, attacking, retreating, flanking, harassing, everything to delay, whilst their comrades hurried across country on either side to cut off the retreat.

Fearful of losing their prey, the flanking bodies, in their haste, outstripped the mountain guns by which they were accompanied, and simultaneously closed upon the retiring Russians at the junction of the roads near Hamatan. Prior to their arrival, however, a company of the 12th Division, that had made better time over the hills than the others, found itself on a hill overlooking the Russian line of retreat. On discovering them the Russians halted, suspecting a trap. A bold attack by the small party of Japanese drew a heavy rifle and gun fire, which lasted for some time, when the Russians realised they were dealing with a small number. Already a hundred of the Japanese were killed and wounded, and the command of the company fallen to a sergeant. Just as the Russians were about to close upon the gallant

band the tables were turned by the arrival of the three bodies of reserves.

The Russians were now on the defensive, and there ensued a desperate fight, which lasted nearly five hours. The Russians at short range used their guns with deadly effect. The Japanese greatly outnumbered their opponents, and inflicted terrible losses with rifle fire. Without guns the Japanese might well have retired and waited for support, but the men, jealous of the laurels earned by their comrades earlier in the day, were wild to get at the enemy. As darkness fell, with loud cheers, all three bodies with bayonets fixed charged the Russian position in almost solid masses. Such impetuosity, backed by superior numbers, could not be withstood, and the Russians hoisted the white flag in token of surrender.

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So ended the first scientific battle that had ever been fought between Occidental and Oriental.

The Russian force holding the Yalu numbered half that of the army of attack, but this disadvantage was more than counterbalanced by the natural strength of the position held by the defenders. The victory had been won, not by the flanking tactics that a superiority of numbers makes easy, but by a bold frontal attack. It is possible

that a similar result could have been achieved more cheaply. A demonstration in front of Chulienching, which might have been accomplished with little loss, would have held the Russians and permitted a flanking movement on a wider and larger scale than that by which the enemy's rearguard was captured at Hamatan. Once in possession of Tiger Hill, such a move on the part of the Japanese would have been perfectly practicable, considering the number of men and guns at their disposal. But the Japanese did not adopt this course, and from what has been seen of their military ability, it is certain they did not neglect it from want of tactical perception.

Two factors doubtless influenced them—one, the necessity of giving the army, clamorous to emulate the deeds of its naval brethren, the opportunity to earn distinction; the other, the political expediency of inflicting a stunning blow on the enemy and demonstrating at one and the same time their ability to cope with European troops at close quarters. These objects were achieved with a loss to their army of 1,000 men, three-fourths of whom would soon resume their places in the firing line. Though the fighting strength of the Russian forces in the Far East had been impaired infinitesimally, the moral effect was tremendous. The Russians realised now that the Japanese soldier was not an

object for contempt, but an equal, bold and relentless in war. This has not been without effect on the ill-paid, none too well-treated Russian soldier—an effect upon which the Japanese calculated.

So important a battle must not be passed by without consideration of some of its more important features.

The fact that the promontory of Tiger Hill, jutting out into the river bed, commanded the Yalu for miles above and below, made its possession a necessity to the Japanese. That which constituted its value in Japanese eyes should also have made it of paramount importance from the Russian point of view. The neck joining Tiger Hill to the mountainous country in rear is about 150 feet high, and the promontory itself about 500 feet high. Viewed from the low bank of the Korean side of the Yalu Tiger Hill stands out bold and bluff, a mass of dark rock completely blocking the view up the Ai valley. In Russian hands it meant that every Japanese movement near Wiju was dominated. In Japanese hands it meant a *point d'appui* from which the Russian positions could be threatened. Owing to the broad and swift-flowing Yalu an attack upon it from Wiju was out of the question. And so there arose the necessity for the laborious march of the 12th Division, a manœuvre loosely described in many reports of the battle as a turning of the

Russian left flank. It was, however, nothing more than an attack, necessarily circuitous, on the only point from which the Japanese army could deploy in safety prior to their assault on the Russian positions.

Of manifest importance to the Japanese was the degree of vigour with which the Russian artillery might oppose their advance across the sandy bed of the Yalu. In face of rifle and shrapnel fire combined they frankly admitted their impotence; they schemed, therefore, to eliminate the Russian guns from the problem. The Japanese field gun was no match for the Russian at long range, and so it became necessary to find means other than that of direct bombardment from the Korean bank of the river. A reconnaissance of the island of Kintei demonstrated the feasibility of secretly establishing the guns at a range where their fire would be most effective against Conical Hill.

The employment of howitzers was decided upon long before war was declared. It was realised that the Russians were bound to make a stand somewhere against the army to be landed in Korea and marched northward. The Japanese attachés who followed our troops throughout the South African War were greatly impressed by the ability of sufficiently entrenched infantry to disregard shelling by field artillery. And therefrom they argued that when the

Russians made the anticipated stand they must be provided with more effective weapons than field guns if they were to win forward.

The Russian army numbered nigh 20,000 men, yet the Japanese struck at a fraction of that number and inflicted a calamitous defeat on the whole. Until the very last moment the Russians were never clear as to the point from which the real attack was being made. The distribution of the 2nd Division far below Wiju, and the Twelfth far above, puzzled them to such an extent that their forces were scattered up and down the right bank of the river whence they could not be conveniently concentrated. At the psychological moment the Japanese commander rolled up his men on Wiju, and crossed the river, the while half the Russian army was expecting him elsewhere.

The Japanese victory at the Yalu was no particular feat of arms; it needed no high soldierly qualities to smash up the Russian artillery with numbers, weight, and position in their favour; nor was it a remarkable performance of the infantry attacking positions in which the defenders were hopelessly demoralised by shell fire—in fact, all the glory lay with the enemy for holding out as they did. At the Yalu the bravery of the Japanese was not particularly highly tried, though it has since been shown to be second to none in the world. But the Japanese

victory, nevertheless, was a great triumph, and one which will always entitle the Battle of the Yalu to be considered one of the most significant battles of modern times. For here, for the first time in history, the Oriental, handling modern weapons, had thrashed the Occidental. And the victory was due not to overwhelming numbers—for the disparity in numbers was equalised by the advantage in position—but to the more intelligent use of weapons that were essentially of the West, by men who were Eastern, and not long since emancipated from the use of bows and arrows.

Surely the Japanese statesmen who have made this war were well entitled, after the Battle of the Yalu, to turn to the nations and say, "We are one of you now."

CHAPTER IX

KOREAN AND CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

HAVING crossed the Yalu, one immediately encounters evidence of a remarkable difference between the nature of the people of the country newly entered and that left behind. An important indication of the degree of civilisation attained by peoples and a sure index to their character, particularly in states where social organisation has not reached the pitch it has in Europe, is to be obtained by observation of the manner in which they house and dress themselves. The village of Chulienching, barely two miles distant from Wiju, is inhabited by hundreds where the Korean town numbers its dwellers by thousands. The assumption that the latter should present a better appearance architecturally than its Chinese *vis-à-vis* proves, however, to be entirely unwarranted. For whilst Wiju possesses no single house with which it is possible to associate the idea of architecture, Chulienching consists of a single street in which every

house is substantially and correctly built in uniform style.

A street in a Korean town boasts the merit of extreme picturesqueness. In its aspect on a bright sunny day there is much to attract the attention and satisfy the artistic sense of the traveller newly introduced to Korean customs and fashions. The quaint headgear, the flowing garments, the coloured waistcoats of the respectable, the twisted cloth on the head of the coolie, his voluminous trousers, his straw sandals, are all unique, almost all peculiar to this country alone. Everyone carries the yard-long pipe, a coloured tobacco-bag, a string round the waist, from which depends a bunch of strange things, the use of which puzzles the uninitiated. Coolies carry a long-legged wooden framework on their backs, which enables them to rest a load without the exertion of lowering and rehoisting. Women move timidly along, the better class enveloped in an emerald-green cloak which covers the head, and, held together with one hand, allows the wearer to peep forth and show so much of her face as vanity or curiosity prompts. The common women dress in a high-waisted petticoat, from between which and a short bodice the naked breasts protrude. Many of the men wear enormous tortoise-shell spectacles of coloured glass to protect their eyes from the light. Others sport straw-woven hats of prodigious dimen-

sions—an indication of the death of some near relative. Young, fresh-coloured, clear-skinned, bright-eyed persons, wearing a thick plait of hair down the back, are conspicuous, and excite the interest of the admirer of the other sex until the discovery is made that these are boys whose pigtails intimate to the world that they have not yet been united in matrimony. The street in which these people walk, chatter, or rest themselves is, perhaps, twelve feet in width. But shops open in front, as elsewhere in the East, push their wares forward, and encroach on the limited space; hawkers' stalls fill up the narrow way until there is little accommodation left for the passer-by. On either hand of the stream of people, who elbow and jostle each other with easy good nature, are ranged the houses which form the street. All are built of mud; all have little mud verandahs in front, and none boast doors through which it is possible to enter without bending the body double. Such a thing as a native house with a second story does not exist in all Korea. One virtue a Korean house does possess—it is always warm, the result of the simple and economical plan of making the kitchen chimney run under the living-room instead of straight into the open air as we benighted Westerners do. One feature of the Korean house is that it affords a comfortable home and good living to a greater—and

hungrier—variety of the many-footed than is known even to European naturalists.

Such is a Korean street under the friendly light and warmth of the sun. But let the flood-gates of heaven be opened, and there is a lamentable alteration in its aspect. The shopmen withdraw their goods and close their doors and windows, for these are so low and close to the roadway that the falling rain splashes in, whilst a mounted traveller deluges them with liquid mud. The street is almost deserted, and those caught abroad or kept out by business present a miserable draggled appearance. The open drains filled with filth are flushed, and overflow into the road, creating a quagmire which can only be traversed by the aid of stones that project here and there and afford a precarious foothold to whomsoever desires to keep clean feet. The quaint thatched houses become dirty mean hovels; the animated, picturesque street a filthy, unsightly lane. People, their clothes, their houses, their roadways, are only meant for the sun, for easy, pleasant conditions. One touch of the disagreeable, the slightest symptom of the difficult, and the Korean retires into his shell, too soft to put up with discomfort, mentally too slack to overcome obstacles. Under adverse circumstances the stuffy, enervating atmosphere of his heated, vermin-haunted home appeals to him, and he rests there in company with his neighbours, alternating

between his pipe and great bowls of easily gotten rice, until the world shines once more.

But across the Yalu we have a totally different type of man. The difference is perceptible in his manners, his clothes, his physiognomy, his dwelling-places, and his towns. Chulienching is little more than a hamlet—for the purpose of comparison the town of Antung is more suitable. Throughout the length of Korea it had been impossible to procure food that a European could eat except in extremity. Bread was non-existent, fresh fish unknown, cooked meat an abomination. Arriving in Antung after a long march, in which one's baggage got left behind, one finds a Chinese restaurant where half a dozen dishes are palatable to the Westerner. Fresh fried fish, meat cooked with vegetables, bread, tea, and, to order, a chicken broiled as it might be in London or Paris. The serving is, of course, primitive, but there are tables and benches, clean dishes and a spoon when they perceive that the visitor is in difficulty with the chop-sticks. Chinese houses in Manchuria are all built on one pattern. Stone, cut and shaped, forms the foundations and lower walls, well-made bricks the higher walls. Every roof is tiled in as neat and as effective a manner as anywhere else in the world. Doors admit the visitor to a private house, boards fitting into grooves above and below front the shops, and can be removed one or all

according to the weather. Inside there are large glass or paper windows, which freely admit the fresh air. Every room has a platform upon which the men sleep at night. Outside, in the wall of the house, is an orifice in which in cold weather a fire is built. The chimney runs underneath the platform and heats it. But whilst the Korean room is mud-built and impenetrable to air, the Chinese room is lofty and airy, with the result that you sleep warm and breathe easily. Every self-respecting Chinaman keeps going at all hours a small charcoal fire upon which a kettle boils for the infusion of tea, a refreshment offered to every visitor or customer of respectability.

The Chinese dress is neat and practical. There is little difference between the costume of the rich man and the poor except that the former wears silk and the latter cotton. One remarkable difference between Koreans and Chinese is that amongst the first-named there exist only two classes, the poor, and the rascals in office, who grind down their less fortunate brethren to the uttermost farthing. In China there are mandarins, magistrates, wealthy merchants, well-to-do shopkeepers, prosperous farmers, artisans, carters with wagons and mules, and so on down to the beggar in the street, a regular well-defined succession of grades forming a social organisation as intricate and elaborate as that of many states in Europe. In

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Manchuria the Chinese may not have attained that municipal ideal which we at home associate with—say—the city of Glasgow, and which is responsible for sanitation, waterworks, tramways, etc. But they build their streets with American regularity, keep them infinitely cleaner than those of London were kept a century ago, and conduct themselves with a decency and decorum when abroad that might be imitated to advantage in many places for which the last degree of civilisation is claimed.

Whatever government in this and other parts of China may be, it is impossible to observe life in the towns of Antung and Fenghwanching—the writer has eaten, slept, and lived in the closest proximity to the Chinese for over four weeks—without being impressed with the belief that here exists much of what is usually considered the result of good government. The people are temperate in their habits, decent in their public behaviour, honest in their transactions, industrious to an astonishing degree, polite in a dignified and unobsequious manner, all of which disconcerts those entering China for the first time, burthened with preconceived notions of Chinese characteristics, and the underlying belief that the inhabitant of Manchuria is a bandit. An intelligent and industrious man here, as in other parts of the world, may acquire wealth and position; by good deeds and upright

living may earn the regard and honour of his fellow-men.

Domestic life in China has the reputation of being healthy and clean, though differing in some respects from what we consider fitting in Christian countries. In these days, when the Russians are barely gone, and the Japanese soldiers are in possession, the women and children are carefully secreted, and there is no opportunity in the towns of seeing what the home life of the Manchurian Chinaman is like. But chance afforded me a glimpse of a household situated beyond the limits of the Japanese occupation. A Chinaman, whom I engaged in Antung to lead a horse to a given point, was arrested by the Japanese outposts on the ground that the horse was stolen; that as it was not a Japanese horse it must be a Russian horse, and that anybody in possession of a Russian horse must be dangerous. A simple country farmer, the man feared for his life, and sent word begging that I might come and save him. His wife and family were greatly alarmed by his detention, and sent a son to pray that I might obtain his father's release. Not the least part of their trouble was the disgrace which the arrest brought on the family. I telegraphed through the Japanese authorities, requesting that man and horse should be released, and promised the son to meet him next day on my way to Fenghwanching, and

hear if his father was still detained, when I would personally go to the outpost and put matters right.

On the following day I met the son, who explained that his father was still a prisoner. So I turned my horse's head, and led by the youth, followed him in a direction at right angles to the Mandarin Road and into the mountains that flank it. After three hours' travelling we came to a little valley, in which I gathered, from the boy's gestures, was his home. He evidently desired to offer refreshment, and my horse being tired, I gladly availed myself of the opportunity to rest and feed him. The approach to the little farmhouse was heralded by the usual rush of barking dogs. These were speedily silenced by my guide, and we were received by a party of young men and boys at the gate. Inside the house a stout, motherly woman, who looked as if at other times she might be a jolly soul, found me a seat, and mournfully told me that her poor man — as I was ignorant of Chinese it required a good deal of explaining—had been taken to the headquarters of the Japanese army. Once there I knew there would be no delay in his release, and conveying this as best I could, there was a general access of cheerfulness. Meantime, through an open door I perceived the kitchen, and in it several young women, busy with pots and pans. They evidently took a good deal of interest in the stranger, peeping

cautiously when they thought themselves unobserved, whispering and giving way to little bursts of merriment that, out of politeness, were quickly stifled. Presently they gained courage and occasionally passed through the room in which I was sitting, wearing a look of demure unconsciousness that became them well and which changed into a ripple of significant smiles as they re-entered the kitchen. One of the young women was tall and slender, and particularly handsome. She had a clear white skin and a colour that any blooming young Englishwoman might have envied. Her eyes were deep-brown, her eyebrows black and perfectly straight. Perhaps her cheek-bones were a trifle high, but there was nothing in her appearance that would have marked her out as an Asiatic in a European drawing-room. There was only the one fatal defect about her, the tiny, pointed, deformed feet with which it is the inexplicable custom in China to disfigure the women. The other girls were plainer, but all possessed a lovely colour astonishing to behold where one expected it so little. There were lots of children, all round-eyed with wonder, and ready to make friends whenever shyness was overcome. The handsome girl I guessed to be the wife of the young man who had escorted me. He was a tall, athletic boy who in England, and parted from his Chinese clothes, would never have been taken for anything but a

strapping lad from the country. This utter absence of any marked Oriental feature, unless, perhaps, the tendency to high cheek-bones, was characteristic of the whole family, which evidently consisted of the wives and children of several sons. The fact that there was here a mixture of the blood of several different families precluded the explanation that I had happened on exceptional cases. Indeed, the more one sees of the people of this country, particularly those of the agricultural classes, the more evident it becomes that between the Chinaman of one's imagination, who is the pasty-faced Cantonese merchant, and the Chinaman of Shantung or Manchuria, there is an extremely wide gulf fixed.

The activity of my hosts in the kitchen soon resulted in the production of food. It evidently puzzled them what to give me, but with eggs, rice, and tea, the latter without milk or sugar of course, for the Chinese do not use either in tea, I had no fault to find. When I had finished eating I lit a cigarette, an operation that attracted a good deal of notice. The son was already smoking his pipe, so I offered the mother a cigarette, and to the general amusement the old lady took it and lit up like a practised hand. I next proffered my case to the handsome girl, who took one and retired at a run to the kitchen, whence came sounds of much merriment as the cigarette was passed round from one red-

lipped mouth to another. I got up to hand the case into the kitchen, when the son plucked me by the arm and shook his head in a disapproving manner, plainly intimating that he did not consider it proper for the women to smoke. There was some pouting at the restriction, though the mother smiled good-naturedly, and puffed away regardless of the unspoken reproval in her son's face.

With a long journey in front of me I was compelled to take my leave, shaking hands all round, a ceremony which pleased everybody not a little, and evidently one which they had never witnessed before. My horse meantime had been well fed and groomed, and as I waved good-bye I was heartily sorry that I could not express in Chinese my appreciation of the hospitality I had received. The mother gave her son, who was to continue as my guide to Fenghwan-ching, some parting and rather tearful instructions, which I guessed referred to the absent father, and then we started. I wished that I might have given presents to the youngsters, but in marching order one has nothing to give but money, and that I had been warned must not be produced, as the Chinese are extremely proud, and would be greatly hurt at the offering of anything that savoured of recompense. As I followed the winding of the road in and out of the beautiful valleys and mountains which constitute the landscape of this part

of Manchuria, it seemed to me that here existed a race possessing many of the virtues upon which, we claim, is founded our own national greatness. The look of anxiety, and the tears in the eyes of the elder woman, the regard of the son for what he deemed propriety, the kindliness which distinguished all, argued a development of the sympathies not usually associated with the Oriental. The little household which I had just left suggested the home life of the small but respectable farmer of our own country, the simple home life that has given birth to so many just men, so many high aspirations. There was also in these Chinese folk the independent spirit, of which proper pride is the expression, that we deem one of our own best characteristics. One reads much of Chinese duplicity, but it was impossible to think of any of the clear, frank eyes that had been gazing upon me in the little Chinese farmhouse without being convinced that in them at least lurked no guile.

My thoughts were disturbed by a sudden shout from my guide. He ran ahead to meet a figure coming towards us. It proved to be his father released from durance and hurrying home to the family that he knew would be all anxiety until he returned. The man stopped for a minute to hear that I had been to his house, and to thank me. Then he passed on. Thinking I could find my own

way to Fenghwanching, I explained to the son that he might go. He was slow to leave me, but finally darted off after his father. I would have given worlds to have seen the home-coming. Would the old mother fall on her husband's neck, weep over him, kiss him, as the Occidental woman would? I think she would. After all, human nature in the East is much the same as it is in the West. But we Westerners have the trick of acquiring sadly distorted views of the humanity of our Eastern brethren.

CHAPTER X

FENGHWANCHING

THERE may be other places as beautiful as the valley in which lies the town of Fenghwanching, but I will maintain that there is no view in the world to surpass that which is visible from the spot where my tent was pitched. Imagine a great green plain marked with yellow river beds, and streaked with waters of ultramarine. And surrounding the plain a fence of heavily wooded hills, whereof one section is a great mountain that cuts a jagged segment out of the southern horizon.

Feng-hwan is a noble pile that towers straight out of the plain to a height of three thousand feet. The top is crowned with grey rocks that from a distance might be a Mahratta stronghold or a castle upon the Rhine. The steep and precipitous front is clothed with olive-green vegetation from the bottom right up to the foot of the escarpment that forms the crest. Into the heart of the mountain there winds a deep gorge, the path which follows it disputing the narrow way with a leaping torrent that here and

there rests in dark brown pools ere plunging from one ledge of rock to another. Lost in a deep ravine is a temple built of rough-hewn stone. Bells of iron hang from the eaves, and every gust of wind sets the wooden tongues clamouring in soft, mysterious tones. Bears haunt the hollows, mountain deer scamper in the valleys, and at dusk thirsty tigers awaken the echoes with deep roaring. A wild and lonely place this, fit scene for the desperate struggle between Manchu and Korean thirteen hundred long years ago. Even now traces of the Korean forts may be seen upon the spurs and eminences. Here the Koreans made a last brave stand before being pushed backward over the Yalu by the conquering Manchu.

Fenghwanching lies in the centre of the plain, grey and dark against the brilliant colours of nature. The crenellated walls that encircle the Yamen stand clear above the town, which seems to nestle under their lee for protection. The encircling hills slope gradually upward from the plain, with here and there a bold bluff of rock to give them character.

In a hollow between one of the bluffs of rock and the sloping hillside we are encamped. There is a little dell carpeted with moss and grass, and surrounded by a thicket of wild rose trees wherein bees hum and little birds twitter and dart about. Around the dell are pitched half a dozen white tents. My

own little canvas house is higher up the hillside, whence I may look down into the snuggery below, or cast my eyes abroad, dwelling upon the charm of the plain or upon the rugged steeps of Feng-hwan.

Our bluff of rock is just round the corner, and on the way for our daily swim there is a Chinese temple to pass, a solid building gorgeously painted inside and ornamented at the eaves with monstrous gargoyles and soft-toned bells. Let the old bent priest with the shrewd, kindly eyes show the gods. Ugly pot-bellied plaster images they are, painted and betinselled. But the old man stands erect and dignified—there is here something we do not understand, some concrete symbol of an abstract we do not comprehend. So it is well to step out reverently, with hat in hand.

Then our pool. A small river slips in from the plain to salute our bluff. It expands into a tiny lake, and curls lovingly about the base of the brown rocks that rise abruptly for a hundred feet. Under the cliff there is deep water, and we may enter from the sandy bank, or spring from high up and plunge to the bottom and frighten the fish. In the shallows the water is warm, and it is pleasant to lie on the sand and feel the heat of the sun. But if the head be hot and the brain wearied there are the dark green depths, icy cold from the many springs that spout from the rocks.

Sometimes our pool is busy. There is a bridge near by, and over it are always passing supply trains and parties of men. On a hot dusty day they cannot but cry a halt and come to cool their heated bodies. Then it is a favourite spot with the cavalry of the Guards. When they come to swim they wear bathing-drawers, to distinguish them from the plainer clay of the Line regiments. Then the Japanese are great fishermen, and their floats and lines are never absent from the remoter corners.

On certain days the pool used to gladden other beside human hearts. June is hot in Manchuria, and the flies and the insects are a nuisance to men and a torment to horses. So when the heat was unusually oppressive I used to have the ponies brought to the water's edge. At first I needed a stick and the shouts of the mafoos. But after once or twice they took to it like ducks. When I felt their feet leave the bottom I slipped off their backs, holding only the head-rope. And thus we swam round and round the pool, the ponies snorting and puffing, grunting and whinnying, undergoing all the mixture of pleasure and alarm that women evince on a switchback. On nearing land one had to be careful of their feet and their slashing tails. The crowning pleasure was to watch them roll in the sand, all four legs in the air swaying from side to side. And the

grunt with which they got up and marched away to pasture expressed the limit of satisfaction.

In front of my tent I caused an arbour to be built, and this pleasant refuge from the sun, and the beautiful view which it afforded, made my little paradise very popular. To the Japanese it appealed particularly, and any passing my way that boasted a word of English would come and sympathise with me upon my outlook. One stolid officer, who spoke very good English in a slow and pedantic manner, convinced me that he must have Irish blood in his veins.

My kitchen and servants' camp were behind, and one day, as I was conversing with my Japanese friend, there came a furious cackling from the rear, indicating the slaughter of fowls. Then came a shouting, and my big retriever came bounding up with the dismembered head of a chicken in his mouth. Following him was my Korean cook, who snatched the head away and tossed it far down the slope, loudly rebuking the dog for his low taste. This scene took place under our noses, and then boy and dog retired.

Presently came another loud cackling from the rear. I turned to my visitor and said—

"I did not know that a hen could make so much noise without its head."

He dwelt for a moment, and then replied—

"Oh! I think—that—must be—another hen."

Morning, I think, was the finest time of the day. I would turn out to my arbour in light attire and mingle the fumes of Turkish tobacco with the aroma of tea from India's coral strand. From the dell would come the rich baritone of the gay-hearted Frenchman, who sang in snatches as he tubbed—

"Chantez! Chantez! ma belle, chantez tou-oo-oo-jours—"

the which, having lasted for some minutes, would elicit from a wild Irishman, with a voice like the bull of Bashan—

"Listen to 'im! The little burds can't eat their breakfasts for the noise of that damned Frenchman!"

And then the camp, in towels, would make a ring, whilst France and Ireland wrestled upon the green sward.

Each night when we had supped there was a bonfire built in the Place de la Concorde. Around it we lounged, some stoking with long poles and sending cascades of sparks into the darkened vault above, others yarning of other climes and other times. Sometimes we competed as to who should run through the fire most effectually, or who could toss the caber over the blazing pile. And when the caber fell across instead of beyond we shouted at the leaping flames.

One night I stood at my tent door looking down

upon the red glow of the fire, and listening to the laughter and talk that floated upward. Over the plain from the town came strains of music from the band of the Guards. They were playing some old love song. The voices below were stilled, and the melody came through the balmy air in dreamy cadences, now low and tender, anon echoing among the hills with passionate insistence—and then they played another old tune that made us remember we were strangers in a distant land, a land of beauty, yet far, far from home.

CHAPTER XI

THE TRANSPORT OF THE JAPANESE ARMY

AFTER a week spent in the town of Fenghwanching we were vouchsafed the information that there was little probability of the army moving forward for some time. I therefore applied for permission to absent myself from headquarters, with the object of visiting Antung, whence I could again inspect the battlefield at Chulienching and generally observe the manner in which the lines of communication were managed. With the necessary permit I duly set forth on one of those lovely mornings characteristic of early summer in Manchuria.

Barely had I crossed the little river, a tributary of the now classic Ai, which runs past the town, when I met a train of military transport-carts on their way to Fenghwanching. Three months ago I had seen the same carts landed at Chemulpo and Chinampo, and felt, like everybody else who saw them, that it was a pity such an admirably designed cart and a transportation scheme that seemed to work so smoothly should be doomed to stultification by the

A LADEN JAPANESE TRANSPORT CART, WITH EMPTY CART ATTACHED

employment of inadequate draught power. To begin with, the horses hardly deserved, according to our ideas, to be called horses at all. So far as I could judge, none stood over 14.2 in height, and many were a full hand lower in stature. Of the thousands I saw, none possessed good bone or good quarters. In fact, a more weedy, light-boned, badly-ribbed, slack-loined lot of animals it would be difficult to conceive. At least half were entire, the remainder geldings, mares being totally absent. The cart, on the other hand, was favourably criticised. It consists of a platform of light bars of wood, 6 ft. long and 30 in. broad, placed upon an axle fitted into wheels 3 ft. in height, so that the floor of the cart is raised from the level of the ground only some 18 in. In front there is a skeleton framework of light iron rising 2 ft. above the body of the cart, upon which is a seat for the driver. The shafts after leaving the side of the cart make a sweep upward so as to reach the level of the flanks of an ordinary sized Japanese horse. The wheels look very little stouter than those of a perambulator, but being built of thoroughly seasoned wood, and being well tyred, they are much stronger than they look. The whole cart is firmly bound together and braced by light ironwork. Harness (of a very serviceable kind) and cart together weigh 400 lbs. "A flimsy cart" is the verdict, until it is realised to what use the cart is put by the Jap-

anese. In discussing the transport facilities of the Japanese, it has to be remembered that the requirements of their armies are, primarily, rice for the troops, and, secondarily, barley for the horses. Everything else is of minor importance except ammunition, which of course is carried in wagons of heavy make, similar to those used by European armies. Both rice and barley are packed in light gunny-bags enclosed in thickly woven straw mats, the former weighing about 70 lbs., the latter about 40 lbs. It will be seen that these are highly convenient to deal with, lending themselves to cart, pack, or coolie transport with a facility impossible in the heavy sacks and boxes used by our own commissariat. A great advantage of the smaller bags used by the Japanese is that they can be secured to the cart with great ease, and at such an elevation as keeps the centre of gravity within the base formed by the wheels on the roughest roads. Upon the atrocious highways of Korea and Manchuria the value of the last-mentioned qualification is incalculable.

I now come to the horses, which on landing in Korea excited so much contempt. Out of thousands which I passed on the road to Antung I did not see one which did not step jauntily along, making light of the loaded cart to which it was harnessed. The horses were the same, skinny and weedy. But every

neck was arched, every coat shone like silk, every eye was bright, every ear alert. Truly three months of regular daily work had agreed with these animals. And for excellent reasons. The Japanese have the reputation of being bad horsemasters, and so, indeed, they often appear to be. But in dealing with their transport horses they have exercised great judgment. They have acted on the principle which a prudent man adopts in regard to his income—that of living within it. They ask a horse to do only that which is easily within his compass. They load him not with what he can pull on the level road, but with what he can drag up a steep mountain pass without inducing serious fatigue. The weight of an average Japanese horse is over 800 lbs. With a load of 400 lbs. and a cart weighing a similar amount we have a total well within the draught capacity of the animal employed. Twelve to eighteen miles loaded, and the return journey empty, is the task usually allotted to the horse and cart. It has been found that work to this extent can be endured for twenty to thirty consecutive days, after which the horses become rather fine drawn and are given a day off. It is interesting to note that on occasion the cart transport, with the drivers seated, can cover a distance of four kilometres in twenty minutes, a performance, I think, beyond the capacity of the regular transport service of any other army in the world. The daily ration of each

horse is 8 lbs. of uncrushed barley, 8 lbs. of hay, and 8 lbs. of straw, of which the latter two items have frequently to be reduced, as the Japanese depend on the country through which they are marching, and cannot always obtain them in sufficient quantities. The veterinary returns for the horses of the 12th Division, which was the first to land, and which made the trying journey from Chemulpo to Ping-yang, which the horses of the other divisions escaped, show a decrease in effective strength of 6 per cent. Mortality accounts for only a small proportion of the losses, the greater part being due to sore backs, from which the animals affected quickly recover. This remarkable result has been attained by the moderate nature of the tasks imposed upon their horses by the Japanese, and by the fact that they never work a sick, lame, or exhausted horse. At the first sign of unfitness the animal is passed over to the veterinary department for treatment.

Having passed a lengthy string of horse transport, I next encountered a batch of coolies and their hand-carts. These are built on the same principle as the pony-carts, combining strength and lightness with a minimum of liability to capsize. They are without the driver's seat, have short shafts joined together in front by a crossbar, and weigh about 200 lbs. One coolie between the shafts pushes and steers on the crossbar, another pushes behind, whilst

one, two, or three more are available to drag with ropes or help otherwise, as circumstances demand. Here again there is applied the principle of requiring only work well within the capacity of the worker. The coolies look the picture of health, strength, and cheerfulness. They are not so dapper in appearance as when they landed, and many have discarded the army boot in favour of Korean sandals, and even bare feet. They are easily capable of transporting a load of 300 lbs. fifteen miles per day, and making the return journey empty-handed. At a pinch they can do thirty miles with a full load. So well is it within the power of the appointed number of coolies to manage their work that their strength to each cart is frequently cut down to four and even three. The percentage of sickness amongst these men is the astonishingly small one of 2 per cent. The unintermittent labour, of a kind accomplished without any undue strain on the vitality, and the simple yet ample ration of rice, have built up these young fellows, already chosen for compactness of physique, into splendid specimens of their race.

Half-way to Antung I came to the village of Tanshangchung, which the Japanese used as a distributing base. Here are piled up large quantities of rice and barley. This is not allowed to accumulate, but is forwarded to headquarters at Fenghwangching, or to either flank of the army. The little

plain by the depôt is one mass of men and horses. Approaching from four directions are endless trains of transport carts, pack-horses, Chinese carts, wheelbarrows, and Korean coolies who have hung on to the army reaping a golden harvest by carrying rice sacks at a daily wage five times as high as they have been accustomed to earn. From the depôt run roads to each point of the compass, and at the beginning of each road stands a pulpit-like erection in which sit uniformed tally-clerks, who check the incoming and outgoing goods. Here and there are little encampments where Japanese merchants have set up business to cater to the soldiers. You can buy beer, saké, hot tea, tinned food, biscuits, cigarettes, writing materials, and a host of other things that the soldier wants. It is one of the distinctive features of a Japanese army that wherever it goes the little private purveyor is allowed to follow. He is a champion robber, and mulcts his customers one hundred per cent. But then it costs him a good deal to bring his goods to market, and there are risk and hardship; so perhaps his prices are not so high after all, particularly when one remembers the anguish of paying, in South Africa, a sovereign for a bottle of bad whisky, five shillings for a tin of butter, and half a crown for a tin of milk. The Chinaman, too, is glad to turn an honest penny, and he offers bread, cakes, eggs, and vegetables. There is thus a large

selection of eatables, and I make a satisfactory lunch on beer, hard-boiled eggs, and a Chinese roll.

From Tanshangchung to the right of the Mandarin Road there runs a bridle-path into the mountains, and along it streams a great train of loaded pack-horses. I inquire where they are bound, and am informed they are taking a short cut to the 12th Division, which occupies the right flank of the army, and has numerous detachments out on the hills for the protection of the lines of communication. Here we have another example of Japanese prescience in the matter of transport. They have discarded all accepted methods, but have made careful note of the various means by which other countries furnish a marching army with supplies. They have adopted not one system, but three systems. Their transport cart is built of the material used in our Indian commissariat carts. But the Japanese cart is much lighter than the Indian cart, can be drawn by a single horse, and can traverse roads which would be impassable to the Indian cart. They have taken our ponderous Indian pack-saddle and reduced its weight by half without any loss in effectiveness. The third system, that of hand-carts, has been taken from their own country, where the jinriksha forms an excellent example of the utility of manual draught under certain conditions. Japan found that European transport wagons were not suitable to the only two

countries in which there was any likelihood of her army having to operate — Korea and Manchuria. These being hilly countries, she chose that form of transport which had been tested in mountains. Our Indian commissariat methods gave her the suggestion, and she simply improved them according to her own ideas. Nor did Japan select one method and arbitrarily organise her transport on a single basis. The result is that where roads exist she has horse-carts, pack-horses, hand-carts, and coolies. Where mobility is of importance and horse feed is a difficulty, she has hand-carts and coolies. Where carts cannot go pack-horses and coolies can, and where pack-horses cannot go she has coolie transport. She can furnish troops camped in inaccessible mountains with supplies as easily as she can those encamped on the plains, and if the troops in the mountains descend to the plains that branch of the transportation system which served them in the hills is equally serviceable in the valleys. No less perfect than the means at her disposal is the organisation which directs the energies of the Japanese transport service. The Japanese transport officer has read all there is to be read on the subject, and has been trained to his work. Men like these make the Japanese supply system work like clockwork. Nor is easy working necessarily dependent on easy conditions. Where are employed thinking men who

are thoroughly alive to the knowledge that a victory cannot be followed up, or a defeat saved from becoming a disaster, without efficiency in their department, it is inevitable that there should be readiness for hurried retreat as well as for unopposed advance.

It may be mentioned here that the Japanese are fully conscious of the inferiority of their horses, which, though extremely serviceable as transport animals — because their loads can be adjusted to their capacity — are woefully lacking in the weight and power essential in artillery and cavalry horses. Promiscuous breeding is responsible chiefly for the poor type of horse found in Japan, together with the absence of suitable grass feeding. The latter difficulty is not easy to overcome, but the former has been taken in hand in a fashion that will speedily effect improvement. A law has recently been passed in Japan which compels the gelding of every two-year-old stallion except such as the veterinary authorities determine are of quality sufficient to warrant their being devoted to stud purposes. The Japanese mares, though light, are by no means devoid of stamina, but imported horses will play the more important part in the contemplated improvement in the breed. It is interesting to hear that entire horses are found to be stronger than geldings, an advantage which is counter-balanced by the greater difficulty experienced in their management.

About half of the trifling number of transport drivers in hospital have been incapacitated by bites and kicks from stallions.

In addition to their own transport the Japanese have utilised that of the countries through which they passed. Korea furnished a great number of porters and some pack-ponies, but no carts. In Manchuria, on the other hand, carts form the principal means of transportation in time of peace, and of these the Japanese have availed themselves to a large extent, for the Russians appear to have been very far from taking advantage of all that were procurable. A Chinese cart is so quaint a thing that it deserves some description. The wheels are low, ponderous structures, heavily tyred and studded with enormous iron nails. The body is merely a long platform balanced on the axle. The shafts are short, reaching no further than the saddle of the animal between them. A peculiarity is that the axle is a fixture in the wheels, which does away with the necessity for a hub.

It is the draught power which attracts attention. Harnessed to a typical cart will be found a bullock, a cow, a donkey, a mule, and a couple of ponies. The donkey and one of the ponies may be followed by foals and perhaps the cow by a calf, the whole making a heterogeneous collection hard to rival out of China. Between the shafts will be some wiseacre

among horses, a sturdy, strong-backed, solemn-eyed little fellow, twelve hands high, upon whom rests the great responsibility of steering and balancing. In front will be the cow and the bullock, and beyond the donkey, the mule, and a pony, all attached by traces to the cart. In crossing a pass the road is frequently precipitous and invariably uneven to a degree impossible for anybody accustomed to English roads to realise. The cart, cunningly loaded, weighs very little on the back of the animal in the shafts when proceeding on the level, but going down hill the centre of gravity is shifted forward, and a pressure of many hundredweights is thrown upon it, whilst the whole cart develops a tendency to dash down the hill. The little horse in command must then not only exert all his strength to hold the shafts up, but in addition must throw his weight backward into the broad leather band passing behind his quarters to prevent the cart running away. His own weight is probably not more than 600 lbs., whilst the load behind is three times as heavy. The strain involved is tremendous, and it is quite one of the sights of the road to see these gallant little horses negotiate, of necessity unaided, the steep defiles which are numerous on a Manchurian road.

Sometimes a great stone in the path of a wheel causes the cart to dwell, poised upon the obstacle. Next instant the wheel tops the obstruction and

plunges over with irresistible force. Then there is a perilous and exciting moment. The little horse loses control, the driver loudly cracks his twenty-foot whip, curses like the heathen Chinee he is, and the whole team dashes down the slope with the cart thundering and rocking behind, the shaft horse barely able to keep his legs. I have watched a string of Chinese carts passing an abominable piece of road for a full hour, and, though in almost every case the cart got beyond control on the broken and steep descent, I saw no accident. It would appear as if the Chinese driver were endowed with brains, as well as the Chinese pony.

Though the Japanese transport system works so easily, it does not follow that it is a perfect system, and one worthy of adoption by other armies. Anything in the world will work smoothly if sufficient money or energy is spent upon it. What is required for an army is a service that with a minimum expenditure of labour will produce a maximum of result. The fault of the Japanese service corps is that whilst it works well its results cost too much. In other words, the enormous number of drivers and coolies that are employed eat up too great a proportion of the supplies carried. It has been estimated that Kuroki's army marched out of Fenghwanching 100,000 strong. Of these only 60,000 belonged to the fighting line, so that the constant labour of

40,000 men was required to keep them in supplies, a number entirely disproportionate according to European ideas. Allowance has to be made for the fact that the transport arrangements of the First Army were calculated to deal with mountain campaigning, which requires organisation special and distinct from that designed for supplying an army in the plains. Until we know the result of observations of the transport of the other armies which have been operating in the level country between Dalny and Laoyung, no definite opinion can be expressed as to the soundness of the principles upon which the Japanese transport has been organised. But of one thing there can be no doubt, and it is that there is much to be learnt from Japanese methods, and much in their transport organisation to repay observation.

CHAPTER XII

KUROKI'S STRATEGY

THE army that crossed the Yalu with so much dash, rudely disturbing Russian notions of Japanese military capacity, had rested at Fenghwanching for six long weeks. To impatient Europeans attached to this force there may have been a suggestion of inglorious ease about these weeks, for it is not altogether obvious that a splendidly organised army, perfectly equipped for the field, can be doing yeoman service by sitting still in front of the enemy whose confounding is its *raison d'être.* Yet it may be fairly claimed for General Kuroki's army that its very passivity did more to complicate the situation for the Russians than an advance would have done. Marching on Laoyung would have left the Russians with one of two simple alternatives—to fight or to retire, according as they judged themselves prepared. But quiescence near the Yalu meant the development in unknown directions of a strategical plot which required counter-plotting. Not being in the secrets of the Staff, we were completely in the dark

at Fenghwanching as to the forces at the disposal of Kuropatkin. We could only suppose that the Russian strength was less than that of the Japanese, or that it was in an extraordinary state of unreadiness. If the first supposition was correct, Kuropatkin dared not weaken his army by detaching part of it to oppose Kuroki, nor could he have advanced his full force down the Mandarin Road, leaving his communications open to attack from the Laoyung Peninsula. If unreadiness was the reason of Russian inactivity, Kuropatkin was obliged, perforce, to allow the Japanese plans to mature without interference. Whichever of the two reasons was the right one, it is plain that the presence of the Yalu army at Fenghwanching constituted a factor in the situation which Kuropatkin never could have afforded to ignore for a single moment. It was strategically impossible to attack it, nor could he strike an effective blow elsewhere whilst it threatened his flank.

Yet, while nominally inactive, Kuroki's army was far from idle. It clearly had been the intention of the Japanese to look upon Korea as their refuge and stronghold in case of defeat on land. They might regard their expulsion from Manchuria with comparative equanimity. But for the retention of Korea they are bound to fight to the bitter end. Though to-day, perhaps, there does not appear to be the same urgency, when the Yalu was crossed it was

imperative that the line of retreat into Korea should be secured. Fenghwanching offered a convenient point upon which to base a defensive scheme. Between it and the Yalu there are two good roads—as roads go in China—both materially improved by Russian labour and foresight. The mountains intervening offer a succession of positions that would be invaluable in a retrograde movement. A few miles to the north-west of the town a long ridge traversing a valley, into which debouch all the roads from the north, provides a natural barrier against invasion. Between Fenghwanching and the Yalu lies a tract of rich grain-growing country, from which supplies could be drawn. And, finally, the occupation of Fenghwanching enables Antung and Yongampo to be utilised as sea bases.

The principle of establishing a strong position to the north of the Yalu rather than in Korea itself being accepted by the Japanese, they set themselves with characteristic vigour to execute the works which it entailed. Foremost was the necessity for field fortifications. The ridge referred to was entrenched from end to end, bomb-proof shelters were erected at many points, artillery positions chosen, and roads constructed in rear by which it would be possible to retire or concentrate guns as occasion demanded. Completed, the position stretched in a semicircular line from the north-

west to the north-east of Fenghwanching. A good military road laterally connected the whole of the front, whilst other roads joined every important point with the plain in which the town is situated.

No less important than defending Fenghwanching was the necessity of providing effective means for the advance or retirement of military stores. The Mandarin Road had been greatly improved by the Russian pioneers, who had rendered it easily passable for guns, where before their transport was a slow and laborious process. Army supply wagons, however, are not horsed like artillery, nor are they calculated to stand the wear and tear to which gun-carriages may safely be subjected. In fact, a road which is considered good enough for artillery may prove fatal to anything like the expeditious passage of large quantities of reserve supplies. To overcome the defects of the road between Antung and Fenchwanching the Japanese went to work with their customary thoroughness and chose the one, and only, efficient method of communication — a railway. Begun shortly after their crossing of the Yalu, the railroad is now finished, and is available for manual, horse, or steam traction. Though merely a military line of the lightest description, the track has been carefully surveyed. What the Japanese intentions are in regard to the extension of this line beyond Fenghwanching is not known, but it cannot have

escaped their comprehensive mental vision that the nation which has actually surveyed a route and built a temporary line will have claims to the control of the future railway—linking the systems of Korea and China—superior to those of any other country, or of any corporation. In Fenghwanching itself the Japanese have built extensive go-downs capable of containing vast quantities of supplies. They substantially bridged a tributary of the Ai, which runs through the town. In fact, all they have done at Fenghwanching proves that they have assigned to that town a very important place in their plan of campaign.

While matters extraneous to military operations of the army were occupying attention, the army itself, though the headquarters of the three divisions remained encamped in and around Fenghwanching, stretched its feelers in every direction, and thoroughly scouted and surveyed the countryside. In front the enemy was frequently encountered at short distances, but on either flank small bodies advanced far to the north-east and north-west. Brisk fighting took place on several occasions, particularly in the north-east, about sixty miles distant from Fenghwanching, where it appeared as if a considerable body of Russians were essaying to circle the outposts and cut in upon the line of communications. Whatever schemes of this sort were in contemplation by the

enemy, they were frustrated by the extent and excellence of the Japanese patrolling.

Late in June were received orders to march from Fenghwanching. The disposition of the troops at this time is worthy of consideration both by reason of the remarkable range of country which they occupied, and because from their disposition interesting deductions may be drawn. One of the difficulties with which home critics have had to contend in discussing this war is the inaccuracy of European maps of Manchuria in regard to roads, rivers, and contours of mountains. Another difficulty is the untrustworthy nature of the intelligence relating to the military value of the many passes, in a country of mountains and valleys, over which the roads straggle.

From Fenghwanching many roads radiate northward, chief among them being the Mandarin Road. As already mentioned, the Japanese fortified a line a few miles north of the town. This line occupies a traverse valley into which all these roads debouch. On the Mandarin Road, and the one running parallel to it by way of Kokaten and Sumenshi, the Russians were comparatively active, and prevented our advance to any distance beyond the line of works. The reason of this became apparent when we marched northward. It was found that the 3rd and 6th Divisions of Siberian Sharpshooters which had

contested our passage of the Yalu were centred respectively at Sumenshi and Lienshankwan, from which points they bestowed a great deal of attention on parties reconnoitring in their direction. On the right hand of the Mandarin Road are two roads leading to Saimatse and Aiyang. Upon these no enemy was discovered, and early in our occupation of Fenghwanching small bodies were pushed forward to take possession of them. Whilst at Saimatse our cavalry performed a daring reconnoitring feat in marching north by way of Chienchang until they reached a point eighty miles east of Mukden. Early in June, however, the Russians appeared in force on the road running at right angles to the Mandarin Road and drove our parties out of Saimatse and Aiyang. After a good deal of fighting, in which both sides suffered severely, our outposts settled down a little to the south of the places named. It then transpired that General Rennenkampf, with the whole or part of his division of Cossacks, and a small body of infantry, was the aggressor. The force at his disposal was estimated to number anything from 4,000 to 7,000. But with regard to his strength and the nature of the fighting which took place no accurate information is obtainable. It may be concluded from the Japanese silence on the subject that they received knocks quite as hard as they delivered. This is the more probable as Rennenkampf

has the reputation of being one of the most enlightened and dashing leaders on the Russian side. From what point of the compass the Cossack division descended is not known, nor is it known from what place its operations were based. The theory has been hazarded that it left the railway somewhere east of Harbin and marched south parallel to, and in communication with, the line leading to Port Arthur. Another theory suggests the possibility of its having marched from the north-east corner of Korea, which the Russians are known to occupy. But the presence of infantry with Rennenkampf suggests the simpler solution that his command left Mukden and marched east and then south by way of Chienchang. The object, at any rate, was, clearly enough, to work down on our right and harass our communications.

At Kokaten, on our left, our advanced parties frequently encountered the enemy, many patrol fights of small importance taking place. The Haicheng road which passes through Kokaten is crossed, to the south of the last-named place, by a road constructed between Suiyen and the Motienling Mountains by the Russians. Along this road a brigade was sent to Suiyen to open communications with the force landed at Takushan early in May. The brigade is believed to have met with the enemy on the way, and the absence of details again

suggests the likelihood that the Russians inflicted considerable damage before being driven back.

The reticence of the Japanese at this time on the subject of their operations makes it extraordinarily difficult to enter into particulars of any kind. Nothing further with regard to movements and fighting can be stated with confidence in its accuracy. So much, however, can be said, that when the Yalu army moved out of Fenghwanching, the Japanese were in possession of the roads to Saimatse and Aiyang on the right, and those to Kokaten and Suiyen on the left. The number of troops that occupied those roads was not ascertained definitely, but it may be taken for granted that where there were outposts of companies at Saimatse and Aiyang, sixty miles from headquarters, the roads leading to these places must have been strongly held. It will be remarked that advance parties on our right were far ahead of those from the centre, and that they were open to attack from the enemy occupying the Mandarin Road. But when the nature of the country is taken into consideration, it will be seen that this was easily guarded against owing to the impassability of the hills, and the atrocious character of the few bridle-paths which connect the valleys. Although the accompanying map simplifies the topography of the country as regards mountains, the fact is that mountains are everywhere, and that hardly any of the

succession of valleys between Fenghwanching and the Motienling Pass are more than a mile in width.

It cannot be said of an army located as described that it marched on a particular date, any more than it can be said of a railway train that every truck and carriage comprising it responds simultaneously to the impulse of the engine. But let the motive power be applied to the centre of an army, however widely distributed, and the impulse is speedily communicated to the outlying bodies, and they too will advance or retire in conformity with the general movement. It may be the enemy, or natural difficulties, will prevent the wings and feelers from making movements that correspond exactly with those of the bulk of the army. Elasticity on the part of outposts is essential, for the object of their existence is to keep touch with the enemy rather than to move automatically with the main body which they cover.

In the present instance we have an admirable example of the influence upon each other of fighting forces in juxtaposition. On the Mandarin Road, where the Russians were stationed in some force, the outposts from Kuroki's army were advanced a comparatively short distance beyond the main body. On the west and north-east small forces penetrated to much greater distances, because at lesser distances they failed to encounter the enemy.

As the strength of the enemy increased in any direction additional troops were pushed up to preserve the balance. When no enemy was discovered, as in the east and south-west of Fenghwanching, outposts were withdrawn and precautionary measures restricted to occasional patrolling. Saimatse was occupied by a small body of our cavalry, which shortly after was ousted by a superior body of the enemy. To discover their strength we increased our own, and a brisk engagement took place which showed that the enemy was in considerable force and evidently contemplating a predatory descent on our right flank. Baulked in their attempt, the enemy retreated, upon which the Japanese numbers in that direction were reduced. And so on, every movement of the enemy being met by a counter movement on our part, and every move of ours being responded to by the Russians within the zone of their operations.

On 20th June information reached us that the army was to move northwards, each division following one of the three roads running more or less parallel towards the mountainous country which culminates in the range traversed by the Motienling Pass. The advance guard was timed to march on 23rd, divisional headquarters on 24th, and headquarters of the army on 26th June. Attachés and correspondents were granted the privilege of moving with the advance guard, or with headquarters of any

of the three divisions, or of remaining attached to army headquarters. I decided to join the advance guard of the 2nd Division, which was to follow the Mandarin Road.

But on the morning of the 23rd the Japanese decided that the advance guard was too dangerous a place for war correspondents and foreign officers, and thoughtfully attached us to divisional headquarters. So on the morning of 24th June we joined our division, and had the honour of being presented to the General, who received us with great politeness. We were assigned a place and paid the compliment of being considered by General Nishi as belonging to his staff as much as any member of it.

At eight o'clock in the morning we marched, preserving the following order. In front moved a battalion keeping touch with the rear of the advance guard a day's march ahead. At a considerable distance followed the half-squadron forming the General's escort; immediately behind came the staff, a heterogeneous collection of officers, including the General himself, his executive officers with a squad of mounted orderlies, the Japanese equivalent of our Provost-Marshal, medical, financial, and veterinary officers; then the foreign attachés, and finally the representatives of the foreign press. In rear of the staff marched five battalions of infantry. These were followed by the regimental transport carts. Next came many batteries of field artillery with their

attendant wagons. Then followed the divisional transport, and finally the first ammunition reserve, the whole forming a string of troops and baggage trailing many miles in rear. Our order of marching and the absence of flanking parties showed that we were in no danger of attack from the enemy. Our road lay through a long succession of narrow valleys formed by impassable hills, from which the Russians had been cleared by the advance guard. There was no prospect of fighting on either flank. Contact with the enemy was possible only with the advance guard, from which the tender care of our hosts had excluded us.

In due time the Russians were driven out of Motien Pass, and the division encamped a few miles to the east, at the village of Lienshankwan, which had for long been headquarters of the small Russian force occupying the Mandarin Road. Lienshankwan was a charming spot, and with fishing and bathing, hill-climbing and geological research, we passed some pleasant weeks. Bad luck, however, pursued my own movements, for I fell off my horse three times in one week, each time upon a groggy shoulder, and then had the misfortune to be bitten on the foot by a serpent—at least that's what I told people, for a snake sounds more picturesque than a spider.

CHAPTER XIII

A MORNING UNDER FIRE

OUT of the thick mist which lay in the valley on the morning of July 17th came sounds of loudly stirring life. The night picket from the hill behind went by at a run, and disappeared in the white wall of fog that surrounded my camp. From the hollow where the troops were bivouacked came the quick shouting of hurriedly aroused men. Stallions screamed as they were being saddled or harnessed, carts rattled over stones, and the heavy clank of moving artillery floated through the humid air with a dull resonant sound. The muffled uproar needed no explanation.

From Motienling there reverberated among the mountains the solemn booming of cannon. Sometimes the sound of a single gun rolled through the valleys, echoing and echoing until it died away in some distant gorge. Anon many guns were fired in quick succession, and their accumulated thunder travelled slowly and majestically from hilltop to hilltop, filling valley and ravine with sound, as some

great ocean roller, breaking upon a rock-strewn shore, floods boulder and crevice with rushing water. In a different key came the sound of heavy musketry fire. Volleys crunched and grunted in short staccato notes; independent firing rose and fell in harsh, tearing, irregular sequence. Now and then there were dead silences, followed by fierce outbursts from the rifles and renewed booming from the guns. I looked at my bandaged foot and cursed the greedy spider that had taken toll of my blood and left his poisonous mark behind. For ten days I had been bedridden, and the solicitous Japanese doctor had warned me against walking yet awhile. But that sound which stirs the blood as no other can was vibrating through the air. For hours I had lain awake listening. Long before dawn the firing had begun. At the first flush of light from the east the guns had commenced to wake the echoes. An outpost attack I thought, not worth troubling about. But as the morning lengthened out the cannonading and the firing increased in volume. Whole battalions were firing where hitherto companies had been engaged. It was no skirmish, but a battle. Thunder in the air is supposed to curdle milk. The voice of distant battle has some such effect on human blood, thickening it, causing the heart to labour at its task. It became intolerable to think that Russians and Japanese in thousands

were coming to grips within a few miles, whilst I lay helpless, held by a petty bandaged foot.

Would my guttapercha sea-boot hold the foot and bandages? It did—and in ten minutes I was being carried toward the Pass at a hard canter.

On the road I caught two Japanese officers and a troop of cavalry making for the Pass in hot haste. One of the officers spoke English; he told me that the Russians were in force and had attacked the Pass between two and three in the morning. The Japanese were driving them back. If the enemy were reinforced they might advance again. All available troops were being brought up from the rear to support the brigade holding the Pass. The whole of our division might become involved, perhaps all Kuroki's army. And if so, it must mean that the Russians had taken the initiative, that Kuropatkin had begun to show his hand.

Most of the road to the Pass had been reconstructed by the Russians. Parts afforded excellent going, but every mile or so we crossed a river bed over which the horses could only walk. These delays agreed ill with my Japanese friends, and no less so with myself. Trotting quickly we passed troops, ammunition trains, field hospitals, emergency supplies, all bound for the front. We were heading due west, following the Mandarin Road which stretched straight in front, threading the bottom of a long

narrow valley. As we advanced, the sides of the valley closed in until they met. There the road began to ascend. A mile beyond, a towering embankment filled the valley from side to side, forming a *cul de sac* from which no means of egress was apparent. There was the famous Pass. The nearer hills and the mountains beyond were covered with green of every shade, from brightest emerald to deepest olive. Dark wooded ravines alternated with rocky spurs that stood, brown and bluff, guarding, like sentinels, the approach to the mountain portal.

As we neared the scene of the fighting the rifle fire increased in volume. The sound was no longer muffled by distance; each shot was a loud, hard crack by itself. The effect of so many rifles firing at once suggested some unseen power wielding an irresistible weapon that swept and crashed through the treetops, breaking, rending, pulverising everything in its path. There came a sharp thud on the roadside: a stone leapt into the air. A quick ejaculation burst from the officer in front of me. He turned in his saddle, and, with an eager laugh, pointed to the spot where the spent bullet had struck. I laughed in sympathy with his excitement. It was four years since I had suffered the furious inward thumping that assails soldier and layman alike when bullets begin to fly. The wooded hills and narrow valleys of Manchuria were very different from the endless rolling veldt.

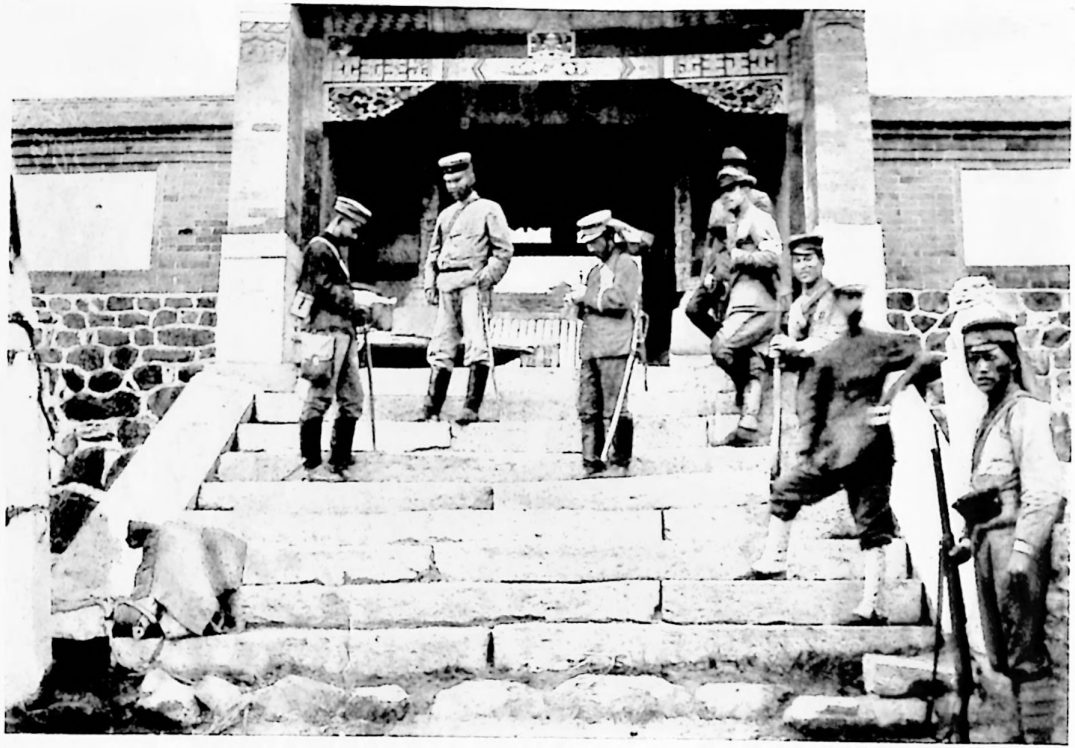
But the Russian bullet, its genesis, its flight, and its impact aroused just the same feelings as the Boer bullet, caused just the same panting of the heart.

We had now reached the top of the valley and had begun to ascend towards the Pass. There was no deep gorge, such as is usually associated with a mountain pass. The great Peking highway runs through valley after valley, advancing along the line of least resistance towards Laoyung. In this valley no turning or twisting avails. The road must cease here, or climb. The ascent is moderate to begin with. A gradual rise for half a mile brings the road to a point whence the ridge blocking the valley opposes a slope that ascends suddenly for five hundred feet at an angle of forty-five degrees. Not even a Chinese cart could surmount such an obstacle directly. So the road overcomes the slope as a ship does a contrary wind. By tacking from side to side, and ever ascending, it finally gains the top and wins through the Pass by a narrow gut in the sandy soil of the ridge. Just on the inner side of the Pass I ran into a number of pack-ponies bunched together waiting for orders. These were carrying the ammunition of the brigade engaged, which meant that the fighting was close at hand.

On reaching the top I dismounted, and, having tied my pony to a tree, climbed the steep bank to reconnoitre. As I scrambled up a rough path I

realised that the air was alive with the faint wailing whistle of spent bullets. They came in melancholy twos and threes, then in bunches, then singly, then again in bunches, burying themselves in the sand and grass with sudden little sighs, as if in relief from the weariness of aimless flight. There could be no doubt of the near neighbourhood of fighting, even if the continuous and overwhelming racket of rifle fire had not already indicated that our allies and the Russians were hard at it. I soon had my glasses out, praying, whilst I examined the expanse before me, that the precious prisms might not be injured by any of those disconcerting bullets that whistled so mournfully over my head.

It was a beautiful and varied scene that met the eye. Hills, rocky pinnacles, valleys, rivers, and here and there nestling villages were tumbled together in inextricable confusion. Everything was covered with rich-toned green; only the twisting streams and their broad stony beds departed from the prevailing colour. In the cobalt above floated snow-white clouds that, passing before the glowing sun, caused deep shadows to sweep the broad expanse before me. Right and left towered the high ranges flanking the Pass. In front was a deep ravine formed by spurs striking out almost from the spot where I stood. The spur on the right dwindled down into the valley a short distance away. That on the left



ENTRANCE TO THE NEW TEMPLE TO KWONG

spread out into a ridged and wooded upland that gradually fell away to the west, and terminated in a knoll 1,500 yards distant. The road, in debouching from the Pass, turned sharp to the left, curled round the head of the ravine, and then, skirting its edge, continued towards the knoll, where stood a Chinese temple that played an important part in the China-Japan War.

The influence of the god Kwong, to whom it is dedicated, prevented the Japanese from advancing beyond Motien Pass in their war with China in 1894. The honour and wealth accruing to the temple in consequence resulted in the erection of a second temple to Kwong. That divinity now shows his appreciation of the compliment by employing the Japanese armies to thrust the hated Russians out of Manchuria—a service the like of which, the Chinaman considers, is quite beyond the ability of any god of the Christian missionary.

From the temple the road turned to the left, passing along the edge of the upland, until it reached the new temple five hundred yards further. Here the upland threw out a succession of low rocky hills, pointing west, that divided a greater valley into two lesser ones. The Mandarin Road ran down into the one on the right, the other formed the approach to the upland.

At first I could see no sign of strife, or of warlike

paraphernalia. But presently on a slope to the left I discovered a long line of infantry reserves, and near them a bunch of pack-ponies bearing boxes that unmistakably held ammunition. The fighting was on the upland in the immediate left of the Pass, showing that the Russians had made a bold bid for its possession, as the nearer part of the upland was within a few hundred yards of the spot where I stood; and whilst strapping up the glasses I observed for the first time, within a few feet, a trench littered with cartridge-cases and clips, proving that the Japanese had had their work cut out, earlier in the morning, to repel the enemy.

I hurried back to my pony and pushed on to a point in the road six hundred yards away. Forcing the pony through a thick hedge, I found myself on the lower part of the slope on which I had seen the line of infantry reserves, and in the midst of a Field Hospital, where were visible some of the consequences of the firing which, all the while, was rending the air. One man lay on his back dead. Another was drenched with blood from a wound in the thigh. Others lay prone, their faces working in agony whilst they waited their turn for attention. Several were already bound up with the pink bandages used by the Japanese doctors; these were smoking and chatting quite cheerfully among themselves. A Japanese soldier takes a great pride in a wound, thinking the

risk to life a small price to pay for an honourable scar.

Pressing up the slope, I came to the reserves and passed through them. The men were in high spirits —laughing, singing, smoking, evidently much elated at the prospect of fighting. As I went by they nudged each other and murmured "Rooski," and thought it a great joke when I indignantly waved my hand in denial, pointing to my arm-band as proof of my innocence. They were all young fellows from an unsophisticated part of Japan, where Europeans are almost unknown, and they gazed at me and my kit with much interest—an interest that I should have taken more pains to gratify if I had known what was to happen within the hour. Placing rosy-cheeked, overgrown babies like these in the fighting line seemed like sending lambs to the slaughter, although, indeed, they behave more like young tigers when they get there.

Topping the slope, I found myself in a little open space where were two Japanese doctors and a batch of stretcher-bearers. They were making for the edge of a wood just in front, and I followed them. Passing a clump of bushes I heard groaning, and looking through, saw a Japanese soldier huddled up in a heap, evidently sorely wounded. At my shout two of the stretcher-bearers came back, and they

were soon carefully carrying the poor fellow back to the hospital.

From the wood came a deafening fusillade. Overhead the bullets streamed continuously with the shrill whistle of high velocity. The Japanese firing line was close in front. The Russians could only be a few hundred yards further, for the slightly deeper "knock" of their larger calibred rifles was almost as distinct as the sharper cracking of the Japanese pieces. Pushing into the wood by a narrow path, I was compelled to dismount and lead my horse, owing to the lowness of the branches. The firing now sounded very close, and through the trees I could see a company of Japanese soldiers a little way ahead. They were coming out of a trench and forming up. Just as I approached there was a loud shout, and they moved forward at a run, dodging around the trees, crouching under the branches, and pushing through the undergrowth by main force. To the right and left were other companies—the whole line, I afterwards heard, being composed of the two leading companies of two battalions, the rear companies of which were behind in reserve. The trench just vacated was strewn with empty cartridge-cases in such numbers as showed that a great deal of firing had taken place at this point. I could see very little, however. The ground fell away in front, and through the tops of the trees lower down I could see

nothing but foliage on a low rising beyond. The Russians were there, however, and evidently retiring before the pressure of our men. I followed the advancing troops as best I could, my pony proving a great hindrance, but one I could not dispense with, for fear of never seeing him again. And if the Russians were really on the run, he would be useful in following the retreat.

All around were evidences of the recent presence of the enemy—blankets, entrenching tools, bayoneted rifles, water-bottles, and quantities of the brown bread carried by the Russian soldier. The bullets which previously had passed overhead were now whizzing unpleasantly close, and I looked for some way of advancing which would afford cover. There was a shallow nullah running diagonally to the direction taken by the soldiers, and this I followed, leading my pony, which took the noise and excitement very calmly. A few yards down the nullah I came on a dead Russian. He was quite a youngster, with deeply browned yet clear skin, and a thatch of flaxen hair on his head. His eyes, bright blue, were wide open, glazed and expressionless. He bore no visible sign of wound, and his forehead was still warm. My pony stepped over him without curiosity, and we passed on to another prostrate figure with a ghastly face and an open shirt showing a wound in the bosom, from which the spouting blood had

drenched the leaves and earth around. Again my pony stepped over the stricken man in perfect unconcern, minding neither the newly spilt blood nor the twisted body that crossed his path. I passed several more dead, but no wounded, the latter of whom the Russians appeared to have carried away.

The Japanese had halted a few hundred yards beyond the trench I had seen them leave. I came upon them lying behind a low natural embankment, pouring a heavy fire into the trees beyond. There was no aiming, for there was nothing visible to aim at. The Russians were evidently in the wood just in front. From the enemy came a hail of bullets that whipped and lashed the trees with lightning-quick strokes. I crouched down to avoid being struck. My horse was half exposed, but he appeared quite unconscious of danger and calmly nibbled the leaves of the trees, stretching his neck and pushing his nose high up amongst the branches. A bullet cracked on the trunk of a tree within a few inches of his head. The only sign he gave was the twitch of an eyelid. To right and left of me about a hundred soldiers were clearly visible. The ground necessitated each man exposing head and breast as he fired.

One man took his cheek off the stock of his rifle and rose up slightly to draw back the bolt. The empty, smoking cartridge sprang backward over his

shoulder, but ere the bolt could be snapped home again, the rifle dropped from nerveless hands, and there remained but a crumpled heap of clothes where an instant before were flashing eyes and tense muscles. A cry came from another man, and he held out a bleeding hand that had been ripped by a bullet. A comrade put down his rifle and got out a bandage. The two heads remained close together for a moment, then broke apart, and the two rifles became busy once more, one rather clumsily handled by a lump of white bandage through which the blood was visibly soaking. One or two more fell backward and lay still, for a hit here was probably in the head, which meant unconsciousness—perhaps for ever.

I expected every moment that the Japanese would fix bayonets and charge into the trees beyond. Though the Russian fire was heavy, it was not to be compared in volume with that of the Japanese. The enemy was obviously inferior in numbers at this point, and if I had seen the officer in command, it would have taken me all my power of self-restraint to have refrained from urging him to make a dash. But dashing is not a Japanese characteristic; they only dash in execution of a plan, which is different from the spirit that perceives a sudden opportunity, and acts, while the nervous energy stimulated by the thought is flushing the brain.

Disappointed of witnessing a bayonet charge, I

resolved to withdraw from a position in which I could see nothing and seek a point of vantage whence I might obtain a general view of the proceedings. I effected an orderly retirement on hands and knees, to the astonishment of the pony, which followed in much doubt as to the propriety of my method of locomotion. I gradually left the zone of fire and finally came to a cutting through a small rising, in which I could stand up with safety. The wood here was very thick, and I had rather lost my direction; and once clear of the cutting, I would again be exposed to the fire, which continued unabated. I therefore tied up my horse and climbed the bank of the cutting to reconnoitre and select a line of retreat from an undesirable neighbourhood. I looked through the glasses for some minutes, and then, from standing perfectly still, scrambled down the bank with a run. At that moment a Japanese soldier on connecting picket duty in front of the reserves was gazing with suspicion upon my horse and foreign saddlery, so different from those of his own country. Suddenly appearing from nowhere, he took me for a Russian and fired, fortunately from the ready and not from the shoulder. The bullet passed unpleasantly close, and the flash made my horse jump nearly out of his skin. I threw up my hands, shouting "ENGLISH! ENGLISH!" in total forgetfulness of my purely Scottish descent. I demonstrated my harm-

lessness before the man had time to reload. He gave a deep grunt of annoyance, not because he regretted firing, but because he had been needlessly startled. Doubtless inwardly he felt chagrin for having missed so palpably. Anyhow, I had nobody to blame but myself, for anybody who has been to the wars, and goes skulking about woods in foreign kit between the lines of an attack deserves to be cut into little pieces—that I took to be the sentiment expressed in the look given me as I limped past the picket point with my horse in tow.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ATTEMPT ON MOTIENLING

THE mountain range in which the Motienling Pass is situated runs north and south. Six miles to the west lies another range, similar in character and height, and parallel in direction. Between these two there is a great valley. Lesser valleys, formed by spurs thrown out from the main ranges, intersect the central valley. Through each subsidiary valley tumbles a stream which joins the river flowing along the main valley. It follows that the depression which holds the bed of this river divides the intersecting valleys into two distinct sets, one belonging to the Motienling range, and the other to the opposite range. The Russian forces in occupation of the further range make use of the small valley traversed by the Mandarin Road. In their operations against the Japanese they march into the central valley, where they find in front of them a selection of approaches to the Motienling range. It happens that the spurs thrown out near the Pass

radiate fanwise, with the result that the valleys formed by them converge on the Pass. Of this fact the Russians have endeavoured to take advantage.

On July 4th they sent two battalions to take the Pass, possibly aware that it was held by a single battalion. The Japanese were encamped a mile to the west of the actual Pass, in a position where their capture was perfectly simple, provided the pickets slept soundly. The attacking battalions advanced along different valleys, intending, no doubt, that, whilst the battalion on the right engaged the Japanese, the other on the left would slip up in rear and occupy the Pass. This admirable plan was execrably executed, besides which bad luck attended the Russians. The Japanese sentries were wide awake, and gave early intimation of their approach. Two companies advanced through a wood upon the battalion attacking from the right, and handled it very severely. The other two companies waited at the top of a ravine for the second battalion, which never appeared. Thus, owing to the wakefulness of the Japanese outposts, and the dilatoriness of their comrades, the Russians were defeated. But the tactical value of the plan appeared so high to the enemy that a second venture was decided upon. After a fortnight of preparation, on July 17th, the day of which I write, another attack on a much greater scale was made upon the coveted position at Motienling, the

enemy employing brigades where previously they had deemed battalions sufficient.

At three o'clock in the morning a number of infantry advanced from Towan, and drove in the Japanese outpost from the second temple. The outpost retired on the line of defence according to instructions, and the Japanese house was put in order. The battalion on duty formed part of a brigade camped in rear of the Pass. The brigade was quickly aroused, and told off to the trenches on either hand. A little fighting took place with the various pickets as the advancing Russians pressed them back. It was then found that the enemy, as before, was attacking in two columns, of the strength of which the Japanese so far had no means of judging, though their intelligence department had warned them that an extensive movement was afoot.

Owing to the thickness of the morning, day was late in dawning. When at last the sun triumphed over the mist enshrouding the scene, the Japanese saw the enemy's infantry stretched out in a long line, one end of which rested on the first temple, and the other on the slope three or four hundred yards to the left of the Pass. For a moment the situation looked extremely dangerous, as a determined rush by the enemy would bring them face to face with the Japanese, who, in the narrow Pass, might easily be worsted in a hand-to-hand conflict. But no sooner

had the infantry poured a scattering fire upon the Russians close to the Pass than the latter fell back into the cover of the wood. The Japanese then extended up the hill to the left, whence they enfiladed the whole of the Russian front. A tremendous fire gradually drove the enemy back until the nearer end of their line occupied cover. The Russians at this moment were in the minority, but their line was being reinforced continually from the rear. Instead of endeavouring to recover ground, they contented themselves with maintaining a heavy fire upon the Japanese, who, invisible to the enemy buried in the wood, suffered very little. The Russians, however, occasionally visible to the Japanese on the heights, were accurately located, and considerable losses inflicted upon them.

Meantime the Russian left lay in the valley fronting the Japanese right, waiting either for the fog to lift and enable them to attack the steep ascents fronting them, or for their right to obtain a footing in the Pass, which would simplify their own task. But no sooner had the fog lifted than a battery of Japanese guns, posted on a height to the right of the Pass, swept their closely packed ranks with shrapnel, a terrible surprise to the enemy, who hardly conceived it possible that artillery could have been dragged to such a position. The guns, fired with the utmost speed, mowed down the unfortunate Russians by the

hundred. The slopes on either side were bare and offered no cover; and to add to the confusion, a Japanese battalion, working round upon their flank, suddenly opened a withering rifle fire upon them from the further side of the valley. Retaliation on our infantry was out of the question, as the guns commanded the slope of the ridge from which they were firing, and its steep ascent made a rush impossible. There was nothing to do but retreat. The Russians began retiring at the double, which quickly degenerated to a stampede, leaving three hundred dead. Their ambulance carts afterwards came up and carried away hundreds of wounded.

The Japanese artillery next turned its attention to the Russians on the left, and heavily shelled the line that stretched from the temple towards the Pass. The temple was speedily evacuated, and the remainder of the Russians fell back upon the wood into which their comrades nearer the Pass had already been forced. The Japanese infantry thereupon doubled down the road, and when in line turned left and took up the position vacated by the enemy.

The Russian left defeated, there was nothing for the other column to do but effect an orderly retreat, and this they did with consummate indifference. It was at the early stages of their retirement that I arrived and found them gradually moving back-

ward through the wooded plateau, followed at a discreet distance by the Japanese infantry. By ten o'clock in the morning the plateau was cleared, the enemy continuing their retirement along the succession of spurs flanking the valley through which they had marched to the attack. I now took up a position on a high rocky knoll near the second temple, from whence the whole field of action was visible. Straight ahead was the valley stretching into the distant plain. Skirting it on the left was the broken and wooded ground through which the enemy was retiring. Three thousand yards down the valley a Russian battery of eight guns was cleared for action in a field, the horses, limbers, and wagons a short distance in the rear. Supporting the guns was a battalion of infantry, whilst another battalion was moving to take up a position covering the retirement. On the hills to the right a number of the enemy's infantry was discernible. They belonged to the other column, and were covering its retreat. While I watched, this column came into view, marching in the central plain towards Towan. They were followed by a score of white-covered ambulance wagons, filled with men wounded during the disastrous bombardment of the early morning.

It should here be mentioned that all of these later operations were covered from the Japanese guns at the Pass by the plateau, a fact which was

fortunate for the enemy. And owing to the immobility of our guns they could not be brought out of their position and employed in the pursuit. In the absence of artillery to enliven things, there was a strange leisureliness in the movements of both sides. In little parties the Russians dropped out of the wood into the road in the valley, and strolled back, evidently finding it easier to walk in the open than through the thick underwood. Within a few yards of where I sat a trenchful of Japanese was firing volleys into these fellows. The range was about 1,500 yards, so very little damage was done. Probably 300 or 400 Russians retired in this manner, but I saw only one drop. With the glasses one could almost see the expression on their faces, they were so near. Disdain of their enemy seemed to animate all, and considering the ineffectiveness of the Japanese shooting and their want of dash in following up, this attitude seems reasonable enough.

The Japanese, however, had their own reasons for not pressing the pursuit. To begin with they had repelled a dangerous attack, after which it is characteristic of soldiers to take their ease. They had been on the alert since two or three in the morning, and were more disposed to sleep than to push ahead under a burning sun. And after all, there was little to gain by pressing the Russians. Of the remainder of the day there is little to tell. Once the Russian

guns opened upon our infantry on the right, part of the battalion which had inflicted so much damage upon them in the morning, but only four shells were fired when our men took cover. The enemy continued their retirement until within range of their supports, when the Japanese ceased pursuing, and both sides returned to their camps.

The most noticeable features of the day were the failure of the Japanese to employ artillery during the retreat, and the failure of the Russians to use their guns in support of their attack. For the Japanese there is the conclusive excuse that the draught power of their horses is totally inadequate to move their guns quickly in hilly ground. It must be mentioned, too, that the extraordinarily deliberate retreat of the Russians made them suspicious of some trap. In keeping their guns in position they were guarding against any unexpected move, a move which might have resulted in capture of the guns if they were brought out into the open from which they could not be removed in a hurry. For the Russians there seems no excuse, for their guns are well horsed and their drivers skilful in their management. Several positions existed from which the guns could have supported the attack of the infantry. In fact, artillery was essential to a successful attack, yet General Keller did not employ this important arm of offence. Whilst it is hardly possible to

completely comprehend the enemy's designs, and their reasons for particular action, fairly accurate opinions can be formed of the tactics employed. The impression was that the Russians gave evidence of a want of knowledge of the use of modern weapons, both in regard to artillery and rifles. In their attack on the left of the Pass part of their line occupied a position which in South Africa would have been regarded as untenable, as events quickly proved it to be. In watching the movements later in the morning one felt that a couple of horse batteries dashing from point to point, as we had often seen them in the Boer war, would have put an entirely different complexion on the fight, turning it into victory for whichever side employed them. For the Russians it must be said that they showed great coolness, and for the Japanese that they were steady at an extremely critical moment. The blunder of the day, of course, was the position in which the Russian left allowed themselves to be caught when day broke. They ought to have occupied either a position from which they could immediately storm the Pass, or one from which they could act on the defensive if attacked.

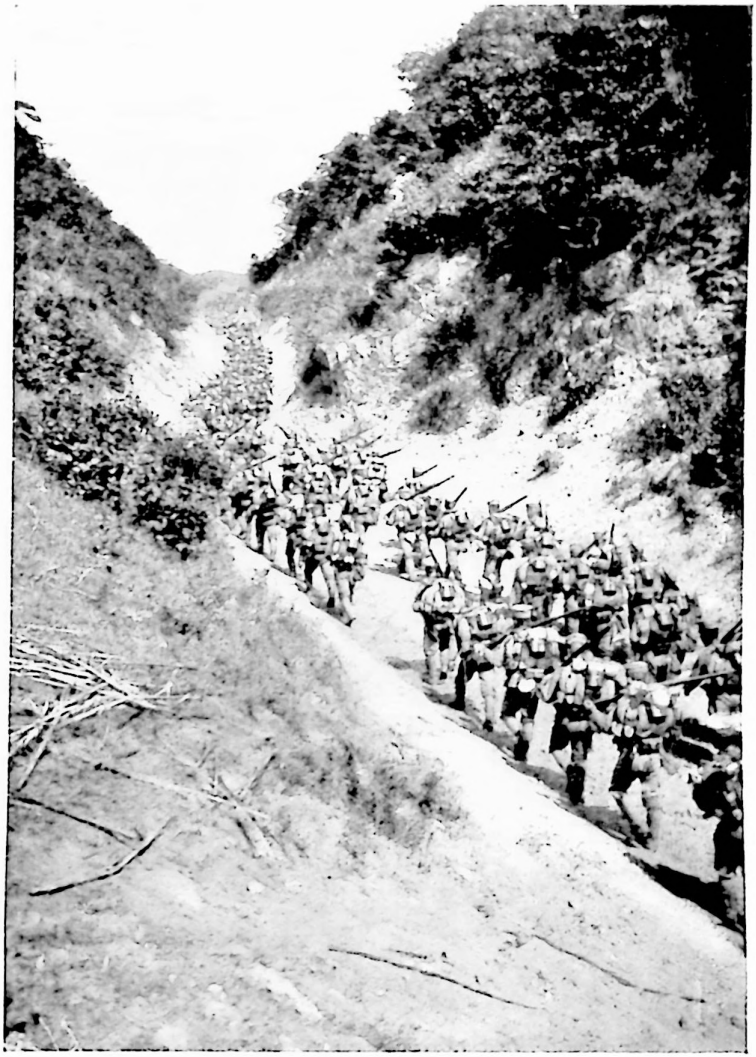
To estimate the force employed in an engagement of this nature is next door to impossible. The total number of Russians seen came to about 10,000. But of these many never came into action. Seven

different regiments took part in the fighting and furnished their quota of prisoners and killed. If present in full strength, these regiments would number over 20,000 men. The Japanese began the action with a brigade and a battalion, of which force two battalions remained in reserve. Reinforcements from the rear were coming up when the enemy was repelled and their services were not needed. Roughly speaking, the proportion of Russian to Japanese strength employed was two to one, a proportion which put the Russians, as attackers of a strong position, at a disadvantage. Based upon killed left in the field and the number of ambulance wagons seen, the Japanese calculated their opponents' casualties at 2,000. The Japanese losses were 43 killed and 256 wounded.

Besides the direct attack on the Pass the Russians made demonstrations in small force on the extreme flanks of the Japanese line. A counter demonstration by the Guards division in the south caused the Russian far right to retire, and probably aroused suspicion that an extensive enveloping movement was afoot. This idea, possibly, influenced Russian operations in front of the Pass, and may partially account for their somewhat pusillanimous retirement later in the day. The movement against the Japanese right at Gibato, six miles to the north, resulted in a fierce fight, worthy of descrip-

tion. It took the form of an attack, by three battalions, on a breach in the Motienling range six miles north of the Pass. After examination of the scene of the fight which ensued, and some discussion of the circumstances, it does not seem clear whether the move was intended merely to distract attention, or designed to constitute a turning movement which should force the Japanese, at a critical moment, to desist from defence of the Pass and retire for the protection of their communications.

Difficult as is the country in the immediate neighbourhood of the Pass, it is easy as compared with that on the flanks. At Gibato, where the fight took place, Nature seems to have done her best to render the mountains uninhabitable and unprofitable to man. The break in the continuity of the range is filled in with rocky conical hills, thickly covered with low trees and bushes. Here and there the steep sides are deeply scarped, showing precipitous faces of solid rock. It is a maze of crag and ravine, deep hollows and lofty spurs, black shadows and sunlit crests, a scene wildly picturesque yet lonely and forbidding. Far down in a valley lies a tiny hamlet, the few inhabitants of which eke a scanty livelihood from stone-strewn cultivated patches that cling to neighbouring slopes. Six or seven miles to the south a rift in the mountains indicates Motien Pass.



A GUT IN THE HILLS NEAR MOTIEN PASS

At three o'clock in the morning the battalion stationed at Gibato received information that a body of the enemy was moving in its direction. Patrols were sent out at once, and the news was communicated to divisional headquarters. After some delay, messages were received stating that the enemy, numbering about three thousand, was advancing from the west. The Japanese commander had a very difficult point to decide. If he posted his men all along the line of defence, the Russians would strike at one point and break through ere concentration could be effected, the nature of the country making it impossible for troops to move expeditiously. If he occupied one point in the hills, he would fail to block the several ravines up which the enemy might approach. The Russians might also advance in several columns, one or two of which would fight, leaving the remainder to work round to the rear. The plan adopted was clearly the best under the circumstances. One company climbed a hill which occupied a central position amongst the others. It had the disadvantage of being commanded by a higher hill and ridge on the right, but had the merit of dominating at least two of the approaches. The other three companies were kept in reserve at the rear, stationed where they could most easily move in any of the several directions which the Russian attack might necessitate.

On going over the ground it struck one that the Russians neglected to take advantage of an obvious opportunity. The Japanese occupied two hills over a mile distant from each other. The intervening country consisted of hills and ridges of the kind already described, offering abundant cover to an enterprising enemy. The Russians might have sent a detachment into the valley before them and separated the Japanese forces. Such a detachment could have acted entirely under cover from the rifles enfilading the Russian left, and could have taken up a position in rear of the Japanese on the exposed hill. True, a Japanese company awaited such a move. But the greatly superior numbers of the Russians, and the thick cover that would have protected them until within striking distance, made it remarkable that they did not make an attempt that could hardly have failed to give them victory. That the Japanese themselves considered their position precarious is proved by the despatch of a battalion to their aid from Lienshankwan. This battalion arrived on the scene shortly before the Russians retired, and took no part in the fighting.

Then as to the object of the attack on Gibato. If the Russians meant to distract attention from the attack on Motienling, why did they take up a position in which they were exposed from two different points, and in which they lost heavily? If they

meant to possess themselves of Gibato, why did they not push home their attack? And if they did want the place, what was the object in persevering until evening, when the main attack on Motienling, seven miles distant, had failed in the early morning? If they had chanced to be successful at Gibato, part of the Japanese force, released from defence of the Pass, would have cut them off to a certainty. In fact, Russian movements, so far as they have been revealed against this army, show no sign of coherence or of dominating ideas, either on the part of field officers or of commanding officers. If their movements have definite objects, they appear to have been conceived in ignorance of modern conditions. They have failed to learn from the Japanese that independent fire is more effective than volley fire. They appear to be completely unable to compute the strength of bodies opposing them by the volume of fire. Within a fortnight we have had three separate collisions, on 4th and 17th July at Motienling, and in the fight under review, where, with numbers greatly in their favour, the Russians have not pushed home attacks when a little dash must have made them successful.

CHAPTER XV

THE BATTLE OF TOWAN

BETWEEN the attack on Motienling on the 17th July, and the last day of the month, life at Lienshankwan was abnormally dull. The Japanese had defeated the enemy in their attempt to retake the Pass, had fought successfully at Chatao, the point occupied by our right wing, and had scored in other directions as well. Yet there was no sign of movement, no indication that our successes were to be followed up and the enemy struck whilst the effect of defeat lay heavy upon them. On the contrary, our interpreters spread the rumour that the army could not move for three weeks; that various reasons, such as shortness of supplies, the poisoning of the water by the Russians, what you will, made an advance impossible. Yet no sooner had the rumour taken root in the correspondents' camp and flourished in its credulous soil, than one swift blow felled it to the ground. The blow took the form of an Army Order, dated 30th July. In the evening of that day

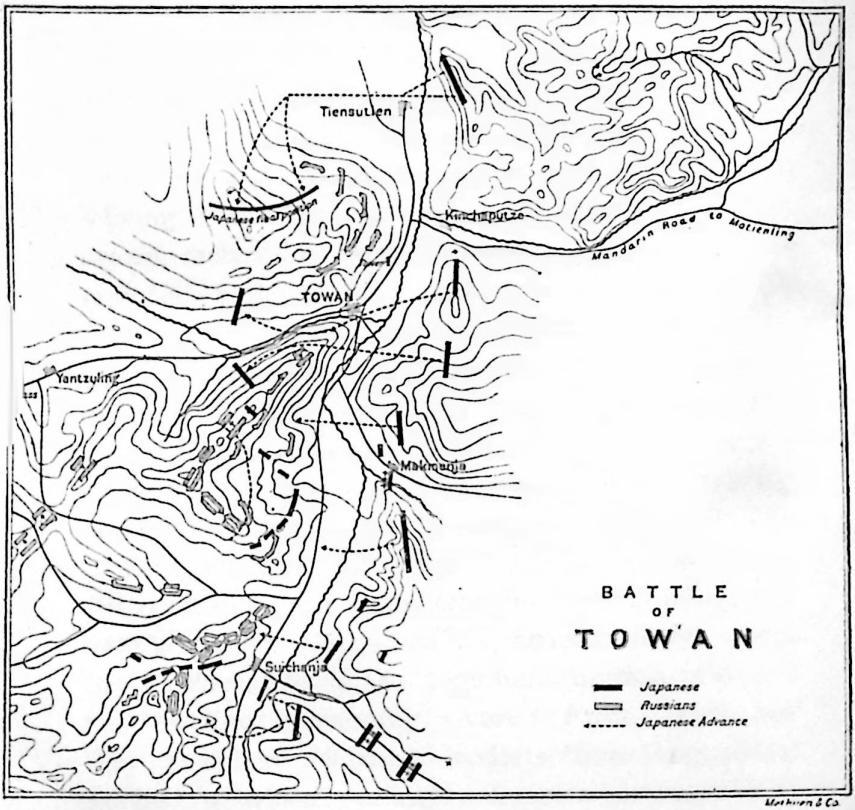
the Order reached us, and within eight hours we were marching, bag and baggage, westward, straight into the enemy's positions.

At three a.m. our party assembled in the village market-place, an open space with quaint Chinese houses on one side and a tumbling stream on the other. A rustic bridge spanned the little river, and tall, spreading trees lined its banks. A full moon flooded with light, houses, trees, and stream, and the sound of rushing water filled the air. By ones and twos we reached the rendezvous and dismounted, the clatter of scabbards and the tinkle of spurs breaking in sharply on the murmuring monotone of the river. The trappings of the attachés, caught by the light, flashed here and there, and a little fire, lit by some passing soldiers, glowed red underneath a tree. These midnight preparations do not agree with human temper, and there might be heard, during the process of tightening girths and adjusting bits, somewhat of German grunting, of French and Italian rumbling, and a good deal of plain Anglo-Saxon cursing. Then we moved off, crossing the wooden bridge in single file, towards the long, darkened valley that led to Motienling.

We passed through a fairyland of light and shadow, in which everything was black and white, clearly defined, yet undeterminable. High up on either side the dark mountain ridges cut sharp lines in the

illuminated sky. Ahead was impenetrable gloom. On the roadside lay things ghostly, things black, at which our horses started. These were white stones or logs of wood, mysteries only because of the brilliant moonlight. Creatures slunk by, or stood still on the edge of cover to watch us pass. They might have been beasts of prey, denizens of the forest-clad slopes that converged from all directions. But they were only dogs, the pariahs of the East, searching for a living in the track of the marching army. Long-drawn, melancholy sounds smote our ears. It was only the lowing of cattle, uneasy in their sleep. As we plunged deeper into the mountains we might have been treading in the footsteps of Dante, bound for the infernal regions. Or it might have been that we travelled, under the guidance of Evangelist, towards the City Beautiful, somewhere beyond the lofty crags that gleamed upon the heights.

Then, as if to hide from the coming day, long strips of white fog came creeping and twisting out of the higher valleys. They floated slowly down the hillsides, and joined together, running into one another like converging rivers. From every rift they came, here detached cloudlets, there long, snaky shapes of white, curling out from amongst the shoulders of the hills. Gradually they filled the valley, forming a wall before us, upon which the rays of the moon shone but failed to penetrate. Soon


Tiensutien
Kuchiputze
Mandarin Road to Motienling
TOWAN
Yantzuling
Makmanjo
Suchunjo
BATTLE
OF
TOWAN
Japanese
Russians
Japanese Advance
Mathieu & Co

we passed out of the brilliance into damp, silent grey. We continued to advance through the thick and humid air, each man to his neighbour but a shadow. Then we began to climb the zigzag road that led upward into the Pass. Suddenly we emerged from the fog to find day breaking. And as we topped the ridge commanding both sides of the Motienling range, the sun appeared over the distant hills and lit up the great valley in which, that day, the standard of the Mikado was to supplant the Eagle of Russia.

The position of General Kuroki's army and the opposing Russians is easy to understand. The Japanese occupied the Motienling range and its spurs, the enemy the opposite range. The valley between runs north and south for about thirty miles. The Japanese occupied the whole of the eastern side, overlapping the enemy's front at the southern end. The Russian front was shorter, but tended to overlap our position at the northern end of the valley. The Guards Division lay ten miles to the south of Motienling, the bulk of the Second at Motienling, and the remainder of it at Gibato, seven miles north of Motienling, and the 12th Division at Chatao, thirteen miles north of Gibato. The Russians were centred at Yantsuling in the south of the valley, and at Yushuling in the north, leaving a gap of eighteen miles practically undefended. Their total strength was

supposed to be four divisions, which in the Russian army number 80,000, and should on active service present a front of 70,000 men. General Kuroki's fighting men totalled about 60,000. The fact that a substantial part of our army was operating twenty miles away resulted in two separate battles being fought, one of which was entirely out of view for spectators with army headquarters. I am, therefore, compelled to restrict myself to a description of what happened at Yantsuling, upon which our left and centre were directed.

The general plan of the day entailed an attack all along our line. Our right at Yushuling must be left out of consideration for the present, and attention confined to the left and centre. Our centre was to attack the enemy's left on the ridge behind Tiensutien, frontally, whilst our left swung in upon the enemy's right before Yantsuling, taking them in front and in flank. Meantime a brigade was detached from our left and sent by a remote pass to work round to the enemy's rear. It was hoped that the main attack would drive the Russians out of their positions and cause them to retire by the Yantsuling Pass, where they would fall into the hands of the brigade which would by then be waiting for them, failing which the brigade would create such a diversion as would throw the Russians into disorder and simplify the frontal attack. It may here be mentioned that this somewhat am-

bitious project fell through, though similar tactics at Yushuling were crowned with success, and with disaster to the enemy.

On the two divisions attacking at Yantsuling, the movements of that on the right, based on Motienling, were simple, for guns and infantry had but to advance two miles to take up the positions assigned to them. Their disposition was effected without trouble on the part of the infantry, but after considerable delay on the part of the artillery, owing to the difficulty of dragging the guns to their places. The infantry occupied a position within a mile of, and facing Towan, and a position in rear of the guns to the north-east of Tiensutien. The division on the left had a very different task. Starting at one o'clock in the morning, they marched in two columns, consisting of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, to take up positions respectively on the front and flank of the enemy. A battalion of pioneers was found totally inadequate to make roads and emplacements for the guns. First one battalion of infantry was impressed, and, finally, three were employed in preparing the way for the artillery, which consisted of field and mountain guns. After five and a half hours of great labour the first column reached Makmenja and the other the rear of Suichanja.

Meanwhile we had joined General Kuroki's staff on the knoll near the temple to omnipotent Kwong,

whose machinations are supposed to be responsible for the gradual expulsion of the Russians from Manchuria. Before us the field of battle lay stretched like a white lake studded with black islands. But the fast-rising sun was dispersing the mist that lay in the great valley, and the islands were slowly resolving themselves into the countless hills and eminences that crowd the space between the opposing ranges of mountains. With the staff we found General Sir Ian Hamilton, taking as keen an interest in the approaching fight as if its planning were the product of his own brain. The issue of the day was of intense interest, for we then learnt that the Japanese forces all along the eighty miles of front between Chatao and the Siberian Railway were joining in the advance. Those of us who, in cooler moments, predicted that the Japanese would drive the enemy before them like chaff were shaken in our belief during the period of suspense that preceded the clamour of battle. The sight of the frowning hills that held the Russians, the impressive silence, and the thought that perhaps this was the day for which the Russians were waiting, for which they had retired and retired, the better to spring upon and crush little Japan, gave one pause and caused one to sum up once more the impressions of the last few months.

Then the dull roar of guns rolled towards us, the

little white clouds from bursting shrapnel were silhouetted against a dark hillside, and the rattle of musketry vibrated through the air. Fears for Japan were forgotten, confidence was restored, the recollection of repeated achievements alone remained.

By seven o'clock the two columns belonging to the Guards Division were in position in their respective valleys, their guns waiting to take up the places that were being hastily constructed. The valleys in this part of the field were filled with mist in the early morning, a fortunate occurrence for the Japanese, as it enabled a great deal of their preparations to be conducted under cover. A few minutes after seven o'clock, however, the fog lifted, and soon afterwards the Russian gunners perceived movement in the valleys fronting them. They immediately opened fire, their first shell dismounting a gun, killing the officer, and wounding most of the gun crew. The accuracy of the enemy's opening shot is accounted for by their having blazed the trees and taken the range of various points in the valley at which an attacking force might establish guns. At the first sign of movement at any of these places they were therefore able to take immediate advantage of the recorded range, an evidence of cunning and originality quite refreshing in an enemy whose ways had hitherto been distinguished by extreme guilelessness.

Of the two columns, that in the Suichanja valley had the harder task, and it was not until late in the morning that they were able to bring all their artillery to bear. After the misfortune to one of their guns, it was found that the shrapnel which they poured upon the enemy's artillery posted on the high ridge in rear was useless, owing to the long range. The common shell had been left in the caissons miles behind. A strong fatigue party was made up and despatched to bring up the shell by hand. Meanwhile, the battery that had come into action for so short a period retired. Whilst the brief duel was being maintained between the opposing artillery, the Russian guns facing Makumenza had opened fire upon the slopes of the two valleys where the Japanese infantry lay only partially concealed, owing to the absence of natural cover. Our men were being roughly handled when the guns in rear of Makmenja, supported by those near Kinchaputze, came into action, and after a tremendous exchange of fire silenced the enemy at both positions. So far there had been no rifle fire, but the enemy's gunners being driven to shelter, our infantry now assumed the offensive, and attempted to cross the valley separating them from the Russians. They advanced until close upon the river, when from the lower slopes opposite came a perfect hurricane of rifle fire. For the first time since the war began the enemy had endeavoured to conceal their trenches,

and despite the tornado of lead that was poured upon them, the Japanese were unable to locate their assailants. Our men retired, whilst our guns now swept the slopes with shell and shrapnel, searching out the places likely to conceal the enemy. With the retirement of our infantry the Russian rifle fire died away. Our guns continued to shell the neighbourhood of the hiding-places without eliciting a sign of their location. The Russian guns had now come into action again, and were endeavouring to divert our artillery from the bombardment of the trenches. But by this time the remainder of our guns had come into action, and they quickly silenced the enemy in their two nearest positions. Under cover of our artillery the infantry again moved to the attack, but no sooner had they shown themselves than the Russian guns and rifles broke out anew, causing devastation in the ranks and making an advance impossible.

By this time it was evident that our left was unequal to the task of storming the enemy in front. And no wonder, for we numbered but a brigade to a division, the latter holding strong positions, whilst our men had to advance across the open before coming within storming distance. So it was decided to await developments expected in consequence of the flanking movement.

During this period of the day there happened one

of those incidents which are frequent in war, and which prove that men engaged in even the grimmest of tasks can never divest themselves of their human attributes. The day was one of the hottest on record. A blazing sun poured down its relentless rays on the infantry lying upon the reverse slopes of the valleys facing the Russians. One of the battalions that took part in the last mentioned advance upon the enemy's trenches, exhausted by their night of road-making, and maddened by thirst, halted within two hundred yards of the river tumbling down the valley before their eyes. They lay under cover that afforded but little shelter from the scathing fire of the enemy. Yet they arose from it in hundreds and, crawling and rushing alternately, made for the stream to quench their thirst. The Russian fire, hitherto directed at various points, was concentrated on the unfortunate Japanese, cutting them down by the dozen. But nothing overcame their desire for water. They continued to make wild dashes towards the element for which their bodies lusted until it became necessary for the officers to order a retreat to avoid further bloodshed. Amongst these poor fellows there were many cases of sunstroke and heat apoplexy.

From my point of vantage I had a perfect view of all the Russian positions and those of our centre division. Unfortunately the movements of our left were screened by a high spur running out at right

angles from the left of Motien Pass. But the effect of their artillery fire throughout the day was clearly visible. Looking down the valley from the Pass, I could see the village of Towan with the Mandarin Road running through it towards Yantsuling Pass. On the right of Towan was the Russian position overlooking Tiensutien, on the left those already located. Straight in front of me was the infantry of my own division covering the nearer slope of a low hill like locusts. Two miles to right of them were the Japanese main gun positions, and, in rear, the right wing of the infantry awaited orders. A circle of four miles diameter, with Towan as centre, would have enclosed our own two divisions and the whole of the Russian positions. In these days of extended formations and wide fronts it is seldom that so perfect a view of a big battle can be obtained. Possibly a tactical moral may be deduced from the fact that the Russians chose to occupy so contracted a front. But it remains true that had they elected to extend their line it might have been pierced at any point upon which the Japanese concentrated their forces.

Near by sat General Kuroki and his staff, the chief of which, General Fujii, was kind enough to put us in possession of the plan of the day. Every few minutes mounted orderlies cantered up with reports, which were discussed by the officers of the staff in

very much the same manner as in our own army. One rather noticeable fact was that although many of the Japanese officers possessed the prismatic binoculars which have driven the old-fashioned field glasses out of use, some were content to carry mere opera glasses. This is a remarkable commentary on the manner in which the Japanese have adopted German staff methods, and improved them too. In fact, the staff organisation of our allies is so perfect that responsible leaders appear to be able to dispense with the necessity of closely following with their own eyes the movements of their troops in action. When these troops are on the offensive, and winning, such delegation of the carrying out of field tactics to commanding officers acts very satisfactorily, but a time may come when instant appreciation of a situation may affect the result of a hard-fought day. And it may be that that appreciation cannot best be obtained by German staff methods.

No sooner had artillery fire broken out on our left in the early morning than the single battery near Tiensutien opened upon the enemy opposite. The Russians replied almost immediately, and, as happened on the left, their first shot, a shrapnel shell, was correctly aimed. Our guns were arranged on a rising slope practically one behind the other, so that the shrapnel bullets almost swept the battery from end to end. The gunners showed admirable dis-

cretion, retiring to cover at once, and allowing the enemy to bombard the deserted guns. But this was not the real Japanese artillery position. That lay some hundreds of yards away carefully concealed in trees. From this point a heavy fire was poured upon the Russians, who in their turn were compelled to retire. For many hours desultory firing was indulged in on both sides, every now and again the Russians manning their guns to renew the attack, and then retiring when overwhelmed by superior numbers. The pluck of the enemy at this point in continually coming into action with six guns against the many directed upon them by the Japanese is deserving of great admiration. Between the occasional renewals of the Russian fire our guns were engaged in searching the enemy's trenches, many of which were plainly visible to the naked eye. Up to twelve o'clock nothing very remarkable occurred, but at that hour our guns at Makmenja and Siuchanja were pelting away in support of one of the infantry attacks, and were joined by those on the right. All the Russian guns came into action in response, with the result that near a hundred guns together filled the air with their deep roaring. Pent up between the high mountain ranges the thunder of so many cannon rolled backward and forward, echoed from mountain to mountain. The ever-accumulating sound surged amongst the hilltops, curled around

rocky pinnacles, and came back to us again and again, swelling, rending the air, shaking the very foundations of the heights that towered around us. The Russian positions were speckled everywhere with the little white clouds from bursting shrapnel, and high explosives caused great volcanic-like masses of black smoke to obscure the enemy's guns. For a few moments the terrific bombardment was sustained, then gradually the volume of fire declined, until finally it died away altogether. The Japanese guns outnumbered the Russian, and had forced them to be silent. Yet the enemy's cannon, superior in weight and range, was not vanquished without heavy loss. During this cannonade General Keller, standing behind one of the Russian gun positions, was struck by a shrapnel bullet and mortally wounded. In sharing danger with his men he died a manly death, if not a wise one. Perhaps he courted it, for Russia is merciless to failure, and somebody had to be held responsible for the bungle at Motienling on July 17th.

Throughout the afternoon, as if by mutual agreement, there was a general slackening in the fire of both sides, the great heat and absence of cover trying human energies almost beyond endurance. It was not until four o'clock that the echoes were reawakened by the roar of guns. At that hour the infantry

on the right debouched from the hills, crossed the valley, and deployed up the gentle slopes beyond. Before them lay a rolling, down-like expanse leading towards the Russian position behind Tiensutien. Covered by the guns, they advanced in three long lines that every now and then were lashed by the enemy's shrapnel. But, rushing from cover to cover, they suffered little loss, illustrating to perfection the ability of properly extended infantry, utilising cover, to advance in face of artillery. The Japanese have already realised the importance of thin formation, and, in adopting South African methods in this respect, have, to a great extent, discarded those of German and other Continental armies. At 4.30 they had entered into the zone of long-range rifle fire from the Russian trenches. Meantime the men on the hill beside Kinchaputze had extended down the slope in readiness to advance. Just as their comrades on the right began to be subjected to rifle fire, they dashed over the ridge and advanced rapidly on Towan. Apparently the appearance of the Japanese at this point was entirely unexpected. If their presence so near the enemy's position had been suspected, it is inconceivable that the reverse slope would not have been swept by the Russian guns during the day. Before the enemy perceived their advance, they had entered ground dead to the more distant Russian

batteries, whilst they were outside the perimeter of those at Tiensutien. The guns near Towan were now in imminent danger of capture, and were limbered up without delay. With infantry converging from two points, the artillery position and the trenches near Tiensutien became untenable, and the guns retired, followed by the infantry, except a small number left to cover the retreat. These fought gallantly, holding our men until the guns were safe, when they fell back in good order.

The Guards, on the left, encouraged by the movement on the right, were now advancing on the enemy's positions at Makmenja and Suichanja. Storming the trenches, they drove the enemy from vantage ground to vantage ground. By this time the whole of the enemy's line was retreating, followed by the Japanese from four directions. Pushing their way up the valleys, they threatened the guns near Yantsuling, which were powerless for the most part, as the Japanese attack was conducted in dead ground. The Russian infantry, however, made a stubborn defence of the high ridges in rear of their earlier positions. Night was now falling, and the Japanese halted and bivouacked, intending to resume the assault in the morning.

During the advance of our infantry upon Towan, one of the Russian guns was being galloped behind trees down the slope leading to the main road. As it

AN OVERTURNED GUN-CARRIAGE.

emerged from cover, our infantry, prepared for its appearance by the first gun, which had dashed past and escaped, greeted it with a long-range volley. The startled horses swerved wildly, and took the slope at the wrong angle. On the steep descent the carriage upset, and gun, men, and horses rolled over into the road. Curiously enough, men and horses were unhurt, and got away. The gun, however, was left, and fell into the hands of the Japanese, together with another, which, while being hauled out of its emplacement, was struck by a shell and hurled down a steep bank.

With regard to the brigade which separated from our left with the object of working round to rear of the Russian position, it appears that the enemy got wind of its movements. A counter attack was initiated, and met the column at six in the evening, before it had reached its destination. Owing to the lateness of the hour there was very little fighting. The failure of the flanking movement was a disappointment to the Japanese, for they had hoped to inflict a disaster on the Russians instead of merely driving them backward, as was the result of the day's action.

When morning came, the Russians were found to have evacuated all their positions during the night and retired along the Laoyung road towards Amping. What precisely caused their retreat, when they might

have made a further defence of the Pass at Yantsuling, is not quite clear. Doubtless a general advance of our forces elsewhere necessitated withdrawal from a point threatened with isolation. Our far right at Yushuling experienced extremely hard fighting, for the Russians at that place were in great force, and made a strong resistance to our advance, going so far as to attack on their own account, jeopardising the safety of the left wing of the division.

The day at Towan was essentially an artillery one, and students of gunnery had ample opportunities of judging of the effects of shooting at various ranges and with different kinds of shell. It was clearly demonstrated that the Japanese guns, inferior in respect of range, rapidity of fire, and weight of projectile, suffered in comparison with those of the Russians. Superior numbers, however, compensated for other deficiencies, the Russians opposing, at most, thirty guns to, at least, double that number. Concentrated fire from the Russian guns frequently forced the Japanese gunners on our left to withdraw. But they were soon at it again, and the fact that 1,000 shells were fired from these two points before twelve o'clock, and 400 after, shows that, on the whole, they held their own. Our guns on the right outnumbered those at Tiensutien, and completely held the enemy in check in this direction. The inability of our infantry on the left to force the Russian

trenches is worthy of note, in view of previous performances of the Japanese soldiers. But for the first time, practically, they were meeting infantry unshaken by artillery fire, for the trenches of the enemy, deep and carefully concealed, had been very little affected by our guns during the day.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BATTLEFIELD VISITED

A BATTLEFIELD, when the combat is over, is almost as interesting as the battle itself. So much is made clear, in going over the scene of action, that before was doubtful or inexplicable. The range of the guns, the zone commanded from the trenches, the natural difficulties, and a hundred other things are explained that, during the progress of fighting, could not be comprehended. Especially is this so in the case of an action in which artillery played a leading part, as it did in the Battle of Towan. On the morning after the Japanese victory I lost no time in visiting the points which I had watched during the previous day with such consuming interest.

Riding down the valley from Motienling there was little to see. But on reaching the level of the plain at Kinchaputze it at once became apparent how strong were the positions which the Russians had occupied, and what a task had lain before our infantry. That side of the plain held by the Japanese was formed of a series of slopes affording little or no

cover. The opposite side, however, consisted of a succession of precipitous hills up which our infantry had to scramble and climb before coming to grips with the enemy; this, too, after passing across a thousand yards of open plain absolutely devoid of cover. Under such conditions it has been held that no infantry can advance against an enemy entrenched and armed with modern rifles, unless the enemy has been first thoroughly shaken by artillery fire. At the Yalu, prior to the infantry assault upon the Russian positions, the trenches had been absolutely scarified by shell and shrapnel fire. These, built on old-fashioned plans, had afforded little cover to the plunging fire of the Japanese howitzers. Russian officers made captive confessed that the preliminary shelling had inflicted such terrible damage that, although the men stuck to their posts until ordered to retire, their nerves had been so upset that their shooting was wild and their spirit broken. At Towan the Japanese infantry had to face different conditions. The Russians had taken the Yalu lesson to heart, and built trenches which afforded them some cover when the inevitable rain of shell was poured upon them. They had, besides, so concealed the trenches that the Japanese gunners had never been able to locate them properly. The result was that the defending infantry at Towan was practically unshaken and was able to demonstrate that accepted

ideas in regard to the potency of modern rifles were perfectly correct. Time after time the Japanese infantry moved forward to attack, but were driven back, almost as soon as they had left cover. Had their officers been regardless of life, and had they believed in the urgent necessity for advancing at any cost, doubtless their men would have followed. But it is conceivable then that we should have seen such a holocaust as M. Bloch argued would be characteristic of modern war. If M. Bloch had had any experience of warfare, he would have realised that human endurance under fire is strictly limited, and that the finest troops in the world will not face more than a certain ratio of losses whilst their line of retreat is open. There have been occasions when troops have fought until the last man has been killed, but the conditions actuating men with their backs to the wall must not be confounded with those governing troops advancing to an assault to be pushed home, or not, according to the cost. At Kinchau the Japanese advance was gallant in the extreme, yet that ratio of losses which stops infantry had not been reached. There have been many assaults in the wars of last century where there have been far greater losses in proportion to the force engaged.

Passing up the valley beyond Towan, I came upon the first evidence of the previous day's battle. On the left of the road, at the foot of a steep slope, a

Russian gun lay helpless on its back like a turtle. Its story was plainly written on the slope, which was torn up and trampled by the feet of plunging horses. As mentioned in my account of the battle, the position of the Russian artillery nearest Towan had become untenable when the advance of our infantry from Kinchaputze was discovered. The guns were hastily limbered up and retired down the slope, through a wood, towards the main road running through the valley. The wood ended in front of the steep descent into the road. The first three guns passed down in safety, but having attracted the attention of our advancing infantry, they were ready for the next one. No sooner had the horses cleared the wood than a long-range volley was fired at them. The horses swerved violently and bolted down the descent at the wrong angle. The carriage upset, and gun, limber, horses, and men rolled down the slope. Neither men nor horses were seriously damaged, but it was found that the gun was inextricably jammed between a tree and the bank, and had to be left. The gunners tore the breech out, leaving the gun loaded, and decamped in haste.

Following the rough road by which the gun had descended, I came to the position occupied by the Russian artillery. There were four emplacements flanked by bomb-proof shelters. The ground in rear and on the ridge was badly cut up, showing that the

Japanese gunners had made accurate shooting. The position, in so far as it commanded a wide perimeter, was well chosen, but owing to the height of the ridge above the plain below, there was a great deal of dead ground in which advancing infantry could not be touched. The line of retreat was bad, for it debouched upon the only possible line of an enemy's advance, compelling a retirement when the guns were most required—to sweep the approaching infantry. The Russians, however, cannot be held to blame for this choice of position, for it seemed the only one possible at a point commanding the Motienling valley.

Returning to Towan I followed the road further up he Yantsuling valley and then swung round to the eft and up a ravine, and so got in rear of the second gun position. This consisted of a saddle between two hills, the hollow of the saddle about five hundred feet high. The cutting of roads to reach this high ridge had been a laborious task and must have cost the Russians much time and energy. Having mounted the steep ascent, I viewed the same scene commanded by the first position. Being higher there was more dead ground in front, but there was the merit of a much safer line of retreat. The ridge was very narrow at the top, and had been paved and built up with rocks to make room for the four emplacements. The reverse slope was almost precipitous, and the construction of the gun road near the top was a

tremendous undertaking: in fact, it was difficult to see how the guns had ever been emplaced. It could only have been effected by man-handling, as horses would have been out of the question. Some hundreds of yards down the slope lay a wrecked gun. It appeared to have been struck by a shell when in action on the ridge and knocked over and rolled to its present position. The broken felloes of one of the wheels littered the emplacement. On the obverse slope of a hill, four hundred yards in rear, was an extraordinary sight. Within a circle of a hundred yards diameter were about two hundred brown holes. Each represented the explosion of a shell. On taking the line from the distant Japanese gun position it became obvious that every one of the shell that had struck the slope must have barely missed the ridge. Some were so low down that it was difficult to see how they had passed the ridge at all. It illustrated very clearly how the parabola of a shell's flight changes shape when the velocity is exhausted.

Leaving the high ridge in rear of the Yantsuling position for another day, I now proceeded across the valley at Towan towards the Russian position commanding Tiensutien. A little way beyond the tower, an edifice 2,000 years old, from which the Russian generals viewed previous operations at Motienling, I passed along the line of trenches, and finally came to the gun position. I observed that the trenches

hereabouts contained no cartridge-cases or clips, showing that the Russian infantry had not fought here, or possibly had not even occupied the trenches. The artillery position, however, was strewn with evidence of infantry fire, a prodigious number of empty cartridge-cases proving that a great stand had been made at this point. This position was like the one I had last visited, in that it was built in a knife-like ridge showing signs of extensive pioneer work. The perimeter of the guns was bounded on the right by a hill which shut out of view the valley leading to Motienling.

I walked my pony along the ridge whilst examining the surroundings, and unexpectedly found myself in a delicate situation. The difficulties of the position had forced the Russians to leave limbers and caissons in the valley below, and to carry their ammunition up by hand. About fifty rounds of shell were scattered about, evidently left by the enemy in their hurried withdrawal of the guns. I suddenly realised, when my pony's feet were stepping amongst them, that protruding from each nose of steel was the percussion cap which, on impact, causes the explosion of the shell. In walking, a horse's hind hoof dwells on the ground and then comes forward with a smart jerk. A tap from the heavily shod foot underneath me would result in both of us being sent sky-high. There was only the pony's barrel and my saddle to

protect me from an explosion, which would doubtless extend to all the 30-inch cartridges lying about. Fascinated with the prospect, I leant over and watched the pony's feet as he stepped in and out of danger. And I sighed a sigh worthy of the most irretrievably damned when I found we were safe from distribution in small pieces. How effective a horse's feet can be amongst explosives I had seen a few days before at Motienling, when a charger stepped on a rifle cartridge, and exploded it, to his own and everybody else's consternation. What would happen if the same thing occurred to a 3-inch shell and its charge is not decent to contemplate.

In front of the position stretched the rolling country which the Japanese infantry had marched over in their attack on the previous evening. The Japanese have recently taken an important leaf out of our South African lesson-book, that on the proved expediency of facing artillery fire in widely extended order. Their advance on this occasion had been in remarkable contrast to the solid lines in which they had closed upon the enemy's positions at Chulienching. We watched them very carefully, and it was remarked by several that they moved exactly like our own infantry. That is to say, the distance between each man was between five and ten yards, with a hundred yards at least between each line, whilst their advance consisted in dashes from cover to cover.

The result was that the enemy's shrapnel did little or no damage. We now wait with much interest to see if the Russians will benefit by the excellent illustration of modern tactics in this respect which the Japanese attack afforded. As already mentioned, the Russian guns at this point, being threatened in front and in rear, were compelled to retire. This they did rather late, in consequence of which the infantry covering their retreat had to make a hard fight to prevent another gun disaster. A small party on the ridge vacated by the artillery made a gallant defence until danger was past, and then retired in good order.

I now left the hills and proceeded down the valley in front towards Tiensutien, where we were to camp for the night. My servants having arrived, I sent them to bring up some of the natives, with whom I had an entertaining interview. I had seen that the little town lay in the direct line of fire between the Russian and Japanese gun positions. I was curious to know how the continual screeching of shell overhead had affected the Chinese, and if any accident had taken place. It appeared, however, that although over five thousand projectiles had passed over one or other of the villages in the valley not a single Chinaman had been touched. Two had been slightly wounded by stray rifle shots, a fact which did not seem to concern them much. I asked one man if

any precautions were taken by his countrymen. He replied that one or two, under advice from the Russians, had built bomb-proof shelters, but that they had not used them. I asked if anything else had been done to avoid danger. "Oh, yes," he said, "we all entered our houses and carefully locked the doors!" The Chinaman possesses the supreme quality of equanimity. He ploughs and digs whilst armies march past, and merely takes his ease when they fight. He thinks fighting bad form, and looks upon all soldiers as barbarians.

In the chapter on the battle at Towan I explained that the action near Motienling was the result of only a part of the movement of General Kuroki's army. I afterwards heard a few details of the fighting which took place at Yushuling, twenty miles north from Towan. It appears that our force was posted on the heights at Chatao, from which on July 19th they had driven the enemy. The Russians had retired on that occasion and taken up a fresh position at Yushuling. On July 30th we attacked the enemy, with the object of driving them back and occupying the range of hills to the westward, and keeping in line with the remainder of the army at Motienling. The Japanese divided their force into two columns, one of which was intended to make a demonstration in front of the enemy, whilst the other attacked on the flank. In addition to these

dispositions a very wide flanking movement was initiated. Gibato, seven miles north of Motienling, was occupied by four battalions of infantry. This force marched north-west to Chobairai Pass, an important position in rear of the right wing of the Russians. Whilst this move was in progress the other two columns moved to the attack. That on the right marched upon the enemy's left, whilst the other worked round to take the Russians on the flank. Our right, as anticipated, found the enemy in force, and was unable to do more than keep them busy. Meanwhile the left got into position, and after a brisk encounter at Henlin forced the enemy to retire. At this moment, however, the force from Gibato had reached Chobairai, and after a brief fight had driven off to the west the small detachment in occupation. This force now got information of the success of their comrades at Henlin, and heard that the enemy were retiring by a narrow valley not far from their front. The Japanese then made a dash for another position, which they succeeded in occupying without the knowledge of the enemy. They posted themselves on the top of a precipice looking down into a deep valley, and were presently rewarded with the sight of the Russians retiring towards them in solid formation, their rearguard holding in check the Japanese that had defeated them a few hours before at Henlin.

The force above the precipice waited until the Russians were immediately below, and then, point-blank, opened a devastating fire upon them. The enemy could not retreat, could not take cover, for both sides of the valley were precipitous, and could not retaliate owing to the position occupied by their assailants. They had to run the gauntlet of the Japanese rifles. Eye-witnesses describe the scene as horrible. It was carnage, not fighting. The Russians were literally mown down during this disastrous march past the ambuscading force. At this point they lost 1,000 men killed and wounded, the Japanese only twelve.

Meanwhile the Japanese right were counter-attacked by the enemy, which worked round on their flank, and it was only the opportune fall of night which saved them from envelopment. Before daybreak, however, they were reinforced, when they fell back to a more secure position.

Coming to a general consideration of the day's fighting, both at Yantsuling and Yushuling, we are confronted with the conviction that the enemy were easily driven out of the first named, but that their right at the latter fought in a manner which suggested that they meant to stay there. We with Kuroki's army supposed that the Japanese forces on the railway advanced northward to a point whence they might threaten the rear of Yantsuling, and that

the Russians were ready to relinquish their position, and fall back into line with their main force. That might easily be part of their general plan, but it is quite evident that their left at Yushuling occupied an extremely important point in their front, and that defeat there would mean the jeopardising of the flank of the general line of defence. If that be a correct interpretation of the Russian movements, the retirement from Towan is accounted for by the gradual withdrawal of their forces there for concentration east of Laoyung. And this would explain the different character of the fighting at Yushuling, the vantage point which the Russians could not afford to lose. But what cannot be satisfactorily explained is the fact that the Japanese, whatever the object of Russian manœuvres, retreating, reconnoitring, or demonstrating, are continually catching them napping and inflicting severe losses. Or, rather, it can be explained by admitting that Russian tactics cannot compare with those of the Japanese. Whether the Russians will profit by the series of lessons taught them by the Japanese remains to be seen. There are indications that they are learning. But they may learn too late in the day.

CHAPTER XVII

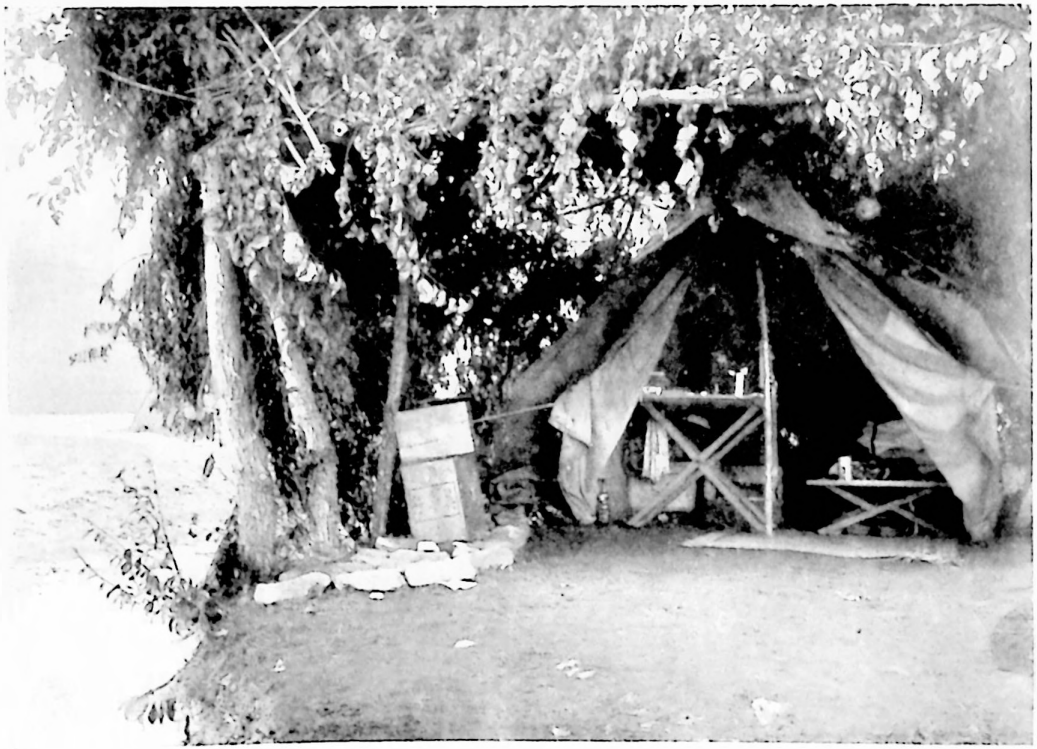
PIERCING THE RUSSIAN DEFENCES

IN front of me lies the formidable task of recording military events which occurred between 25th August and 5th September, including, as all the world knows, the taking of Laoyung and the retreat of the Russian forces after an important battle. The degree in which the fighting at Laoyung was decisive, however, is a matter that was hotly disputed betwixt foreigners with the Japanese army. Attachés and correspondents differed amongst themselves, and each exponent of a particular view backed up his opinion with facts and fancies that would surely have convinced any but those who have personally followed the movements of the two armies, and formed independent views of their own. In fact, the fighting was spread over such an enormous area, exhibited so many phases, and is capable of such divergent interpretation, that for any one man, except one or two on the Japanese or Russian General Staff, to form a conclusive opinion is next door to impossible. I will endeavour,

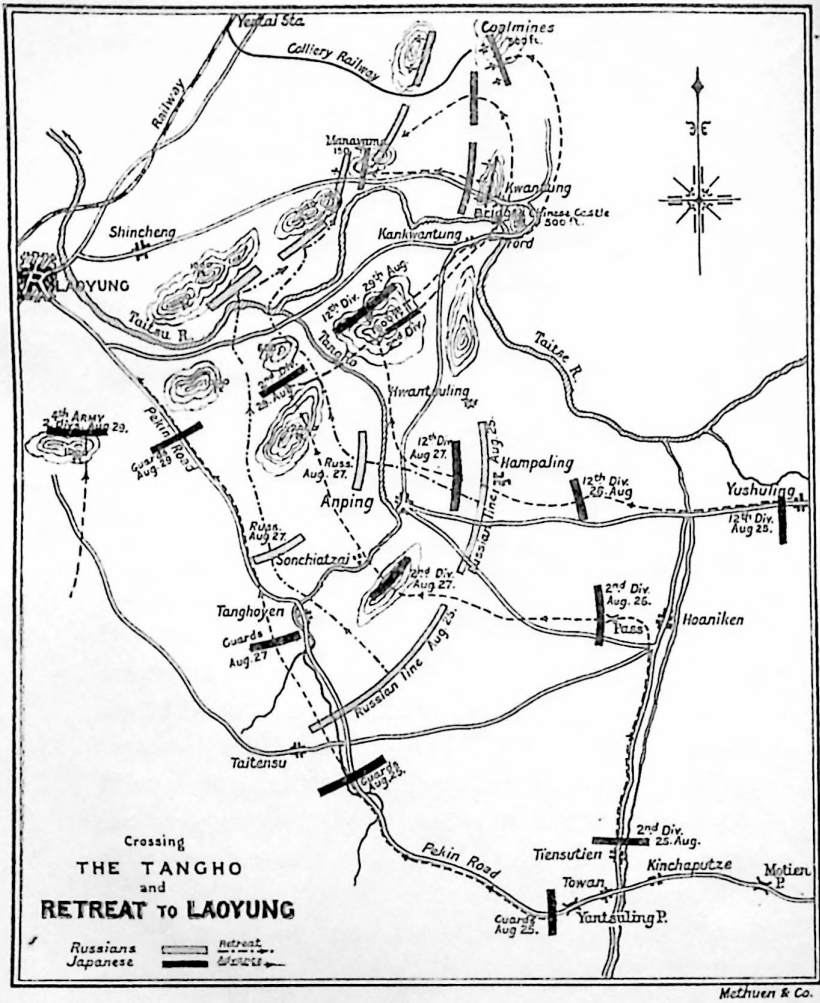
therefore, to adhere to narration, and if, when my record is complete, I indulge in generalisation, it will, I hope, be forgiven me as a fault to which human nature is prone when events crowd themselves before the mental vision.

After the month of quiescence that we had learned to regard as an essential preliminary to each step of the Japanese army, warning was received to make ready to move at a moment's notice. We had occupied the village of Tiensutien on the evening of 31st July; on the morning of the 25th August came orders, and in the afternoon we marched northward. It was significant that our baggage was reduced to what our horses could carry, and that rations for three days had been served out before we started. Camped for so long within twenty-five miles of Laoyung, it was not difficult to realise that we were about to join in the operations against the Russian stronghold upon which the three Japanese armies in the field had been converging for some months.

Being attached to the 2nd Division I have closely followed General Nishi, who commands it. In so doing my sphere of observation has been limited. But there is compensation in the fact that I obtained a close view of two interesting actions of which I should have seen little or nothing if I had remained with General Kuroki's staff. But before describing



THE AUTHOR'S CAMP ON THE RIVER AT TIENSUTIEN


Yental Sta.
Colliery Railway
Coalmines
Railway
Manayama
Kwantung
Bridge
Chinese Castle
500 ft.
Kankwantung
Ford
Shincheng
LAOYUNG
Taitsu R.
12th Div. 29th Aug.
Tangho
Taitse R.
Hwantsuling
4th ARMY
Pekin Road
Guards Aug 29
Russ. Aug. 27.
Anping
12th Div. Aug 27.
Hampaling
12th Div. 26. Aug
Yushuling
12th Div. Aug 25.
Russian line Aug 25.
Russ. Aug 27.
Sonchiatzai
2nd Div. Aug 27.
2nd Div. Aug. 26.
Pass
Hoaniken
Tanghoyen
Guards Aug. 27
Russian line Aug 25.
Taitensu
Guards Aug 25.
2nd Div. 25. Aug.
Tiensutien
Kinchaputze
Motien P.
Pekin Road
Towan
Yantsuling P.
Guards Aug 25.
Crossing
THE TANGHO
and
RETREAT TO LAOYUNG
Russians
Japanese
Retreat
Advance

Methuen & Co.

these actions it is necessary to explain the disposition of our own troops and of the Russians.

The First Army, prior to the movements about to be described, occupied the valley between Yantsuling and Motien ranges. The Guards Division on our left lay at Towan, my own division in the centre occupied Tiensutien, and the Twelfth the maze of rocky mountains around Yushuling. The Russian line stretched from Hwantsuling in the north to Taitensu in the south. It was composed of two forces, one centred at Tanghoyen being formed of the 3rd and 6th Divisions of Siberian Sharpshooters, which we had already encountered at the Yalu and at Motienling, the other centred at Amping being the 10th European Army Corps. Both forces were augmented by various detachments, and at the same time it may be assumed that the component divisions were considerably short of full strength. The Japanese officially estimated the total strength of the enemy at four to five divisions. The Russian front on the Mandarin Road had been fortified months before by elaborate field-works. The defences near Amping were less complete, being the result of afterthought consequent on the defeat at Yushuling on 31st July. A glance at the map shows that the enemy's front rested on the right bank of the Tang Ho. Their main positions were dotted along a commanding ridge that ran unbroken, save for difficult passes,

between the points already named. The length of this line seems to have constituted a weakness for which its great natural strength did not compensate. The inaccessibility of the mountainous country in rear made speedy concentration out of the question. The force at any point in the line against which the Japanese chose to throw their strength would be compelled to fight its battle unaided by reinforcements.

The immediate object of the Japanese was to drive the enemy from the right bank of the Tang Ho, and then from the left bank. The effecting of this plan would result in retreat of the Russians upon the outer line of defences which protected Laoyung from the south. Kuroki would then be in a position to join hands with the Second and Takushan armies in a general attack on the carefully selected positions taken up by Kuropatkin.

On August 23rd the Guards, strengthened by three field batteries from my division, and the battery formed of guns captured from the Russians at the Yalu, evacuated the Pass at Yantsuling and marched north-west along the Mandarin Road. Driving the enemy's outposts before them, they closed with the Russians at Taitensu on the 24th, and initiated a spirited attack. This they kept up on the 25th, with the result that part of the Russian centre was diverted in support of the right. The Guards, confronting a superior force, were unable to make

headway, but their action simplified proceedings at the real point of attack which was to be conducted by our centre. Meantime the 12th Division advanced from Yushuling upon Hampalin, and on the 25th was in a position to join in the general attack upon the following day. To the 2nd Division, marching north from Tiensutien on the 25th, was allotted the task of piercing the Russian line. The inaccessible nature of the country around the point selected for attack prohibited the employment of field guns. A mountain battery, therefore, was borrowed from the Twelfth, and ordered to follow the infantry. How to assault, successfully, the formidable position of the enemy without the support of the artillery of the division was a problem. A night attack, in which all the men at General Nishi's disposal were employed, was decided upon as the least expensive expedient. The ground had been repeatedly reconnoitred in advance and every precaution taken to ensure that the troops would not stray from their objective, as so frequently happens during attacks in the dark.

After a short march on the evening of the 25th we reached the village of Hoaniken, where we wheeled left into the mountains that flanked the valley. We camped for the night in a deep ravine, with army rations, and a horse blanket as our only appliances for comfort. A canteen boiled water, and an

enamelled mug made tea with which we washed down biscuits and bully beef. We slept to the roar of a burn that tumbled down the ravine, the while camp fires glowed all around, and the light of a full moon gleamed upon the great rocks that littered the slopes and filled the bed of the stream. We were surrounded by soldiers, pack-trains, field hospitals, and such like, and the men talked or smoked or sang all night. But they did not disturb us, for the rushing water drowned every other sound and hushed one to sleep like a crooning lullaby.

Long ere day broke I was aroused by the bustle of a waking camp. The moon had gone, and the work of building a fire to brew a cup of coffee was proving so troublesome that I began to wonder if, after all, the day must necessarily begin with something hot to drink. But the coffee materialised in time, and just as I was enjoying the reward of patience a cheery voice bid me "Good morning," and a tall figure passed by in the semi-darkness. It was General Hamilton, up betimes and bound for the ridge above, to see, as he remarked, the first shell fired at the Russians. So good a lead was not to be lost, so I hurriedly saddled and followed, coffee mug in one hand and biscuit and jam in the other, reins over my shoulder. It was a laborious climb over an abominable track covered with rocks great and small. For rough hills there is no country in the world

equal to Manchuria. Half an hour's climb, however, and the ridge was won, just as the blood-red rim of the sun showed over the edge of the eastern mountains.

On top we found General Kuroki and his staff carefully watching the maze of hills lying at our feet, and dividing us from the great range six miles further west. We could see nothing, but could hear the rattling of musketry and the booming of big guns. For half an hour I swept the hills with my glasses, but could not detect a movement. Our infantry was hidden in the valleys, and our artillery concealed by one of the numerous ridges that traversed the expanse before us. It was the beginning of a big battle, yet we could make nothing of it. But we had a friend in the Chief of Staff, General Fujii, who never fails us in the matter of information. This time he did not wait to be asked, but called us all together, attachés and correspondents, and unfolded a great map of the country upon which we were gazing distractedly. And presently we understood the position. We were facing west and divided from the Tang Ho by the lofty ridge opposite. That ridge was occupied by the Russians, and here was the point where their line was to be broken.

With the key to the problem in our possession, we now looked before us with some intelligence. My own division was in a valley beyond, working upward to

the high ridge occupied by the enemy. The 12th Division was north of us hammering away at the enemy's right flank, whilst the Guards in the south were moving against Taitensu. Presently the artillery of the last-named division opened upon the enemy, and we could see, six miles away, their shrapnel being poured upon the Russian position. The enemy's guns could be seen replying, the flash of each discharge showing clearly against the bare and scarred slope upon which they were stationed. We were too far away to see the infantry or any of the details of the fight. And soon, finding that army headquarters were too much in rear to offer a good view of the proceedings, we decided to advance to the headquarters of the 2nd Division.

Diving down into the ravine before us, we found ourselves in a narrow and tortuous valley, along which we rode in the direction of the firing. Presently we came to a bight in the hills flanked by a high rocky pinnacle, on the obverse slope of which were the horses of General Nishi's staff. We climbed up, and were assigned a knoll which entirely commanded the ridge occupied by the enemy and the valley from which our own infantry was attacking. Our rock was part of a low ridge fronting the higher ridge held by the Russians. On the previous night, at 9.30, our troops had moved forward in the moonlight, and by midnight they had driven the Russian pickets

back upon their supports on the ridge where we now were. The enemy, warned of attack, hurriedly reinforced their first line, and waited for the Japanese. At 2.30, by which time the moon had disappeared, the whole of our line advanced and, fixing bayonets in the valley, charged the enemy. A sanguinary conflict ensued, during which, owing to the darkness, no shot was fired, cold steel on both sides being solely employed as if by mutual consent. The enemy, assailed by greatly superior numbers, made a brief stand, and then fell backward upon the main ridge. The Japanese followed them, spreading right and left in an endeavour to envelop the flanks. Daylight breaking, the Japanese pushed their attack on the flanks and gained the north and south extremities of the ridge occupied by the Russians. The attack continued from front and both wings until the enemy was forced to concentrate on a high and serrated portion of their original line. Meantime the whole of our division being engaged in the night attack—a notable force to employ on such a task—there existed the danger that the enemy might initiate a counter attack. It was to guard against this that the mountain battery was borrowed. No sooner was the left extension of the enemy's ridge taken than the guns were placed in a position on it whence they commanded the valley leading

to Amping, from where an offensive movement was apprehended.

The situation in the early morning, now, was that the Russians, centred on a section of the main ridge, were holding the attack pressing forward along the top of the ridge on either flank, and from low spurs which partially faced their position. The Japanese, posted at every point within range that afforded cover, were pouring a heavy converging fire upon the Russian trenches. Between our infantry and the enemy lay an open space on either side, which had to be crossed ere the position could be captured. These exposed zones were swept by so fierce a fire that charging could but result in needless waste of life. Meantime the mountain battery had opened fire upon the Russians in the valley beyond, and brought down upon itself the fire of the enemy's field guns from Amping. These speedily drove our gunners from their posts by a heavy bombardment. So soon as the Russian artillery ceased fire our guns were withdrawn and loaded upon the pack-horses. The battery then moved off to the rear. The infantry contest continued without change of situation, and from my point of vantage it looked as if the Japanese were completely held at bay. But an hour after the battery had left its position there came a roar from the valley at our feet, and then another roar. Two clouds arose from the Russian position

denoting the explosion of common shell. Further firing from our front revealed two guns posted in a millet field just out of range of the enemy's rifle fire. Two of the mountain guns, relieved from the duty of protecting a flank that was no longer threatened, had descended from the ridge and traversed the valley until opposite the Russian position. Unharassed, they deliberately shelled the opposing riflemen.

Before me was a battlefield on which were clearly defined both offensive and defensive forces. The khaki-coloured Japanese were massed behind every hill, strung out in firing lines facing every little ridge, and pressing forward up every slope. The unvarying green of the hillsides was relieved only by the rock-crowned ridge upon which the Russians were scattered. At one point stood a dark-clad officer boldly keeping his feet despite the hail of lead which spattered the rocks around him. Here and there detached parties of white-coated figures advanced from cover and crept or scurried to the trenches. When the two guns opened fire there came a marked change in the behaviour of the Russians. The officer disappeared from view. As the black smoke rose from a bursting shell men were seen jumping out of the trenches and darting backward. So far they had been reinforcing the trenches. Now they were leaving, fearful, as they well might be, of the relent-

less iron shreds that rang and ricochetted among the boulders. Their trenches were shallow, exposed devices designed for cover from bullets, not from the devastating effect of high explosives. The guns maintained their fire, planting shell, in couples, in trench after trench, working along the front of the defence as a sower advances along a field. But instead of the promise of new life, mangled bodies and stricken men marked their path. One by one the trenches emptied. Their occupants fell back upon the sky-line, under which they crouched for cover from whistling bullet and hurtling splinter.

The moment was now propitious, and our infantry within near range sprang up and charged the Russian position, covered by the guns and a storm of rifle fire. The enemy, braving danger, climbed upon the sky-line and poured volley after volley upon the converging Japanese. But they might as well have tried to arrest the waters of Niagara on the brink of the Falls. The Japanese swept onward careless of death. The Russian fire dwindled away, then ceased; the scattered groups among the rocks disappeared; the lines of racing Japanese closed upon the ridge and swept over it—to find the enemy gone. The position was won, and where the Russian officer had stood, contemptuous of danger, but a few minutes past, there now floated the banner of Japan.

On gaining the ridge our infantry poured a heavy

fire into the retreating Russians, whilst the four remaining guns of the battery were remounted and placed in their previous position. The capture of the ridge brought the enemy's guns into action, their fire effectually preventing pursuit by our infantry. The mountain battery then joined in, and for some time engaged in a brisk interchange of shrapnel with the Russian artillery, which was thus partly diverted from the attack upon our successful infantry. Pursuit, however, was out of the question, for meanwhile a heavy storm had been brewing, and soon after we had taken the Russian position it burst, darkening the scene and drenching the hillsides with rain, whilst loud peals of thunder rent the air and vivid lightning flashed across the sky. It was a dramatic and fitting end to an exciting morning. But it caused a complete cessation of operations for the day, and resulted in the troops spending a miserable night bivouacked on the slopes for which they had fought since early morning.

As the weather late in the afternoon showed no sign of improvement, and prevented a recurrence of hostilities, we decided to vacate our position and follow divisional headquarters into the valley. A more uncomfortable task could hardly be conceived. The rain had deluged a path already slippery and uneven beyond words. It was an absolute scramble and a terrible trial to our horses, which floundered

down and cast a shoe at almost every step—as long as the shoes lasted, of course, for horses have but four in this country as elsewhere, even although they are three-cornered brutes. In half an hour we came to a village where a house was allotted to us. It was indescribably dirty and uninviting. With Knight of the *Morning Post* I decided to press forward and find better quarters. Knight was recently killed by the newspapers, in consequence of which he is chronically cheerful, and an excellent companion in adversity. Two miles further on we came to another village, where a Japanese officer had induced a Chinaman to brew tea, in which we were hospitably invited to share. We then essayed to find quarters for the night. But, alas! nearly every house was crammed full of wounded Japanese and Russians, and there was no place in which to lay our heads. The Chinese had been turned out of their houses, and were now concentrated—men, women, children, servants, cats, dogs, and vermin—in a few of the least inviting. The roadway and the adjoining fields were sodden and muddy, and to camp outside meant a night of misery. We decided to accept the inevitable.

We were not welcome in the house which we selected. It was a small one occupied by thirty souls, amongst them a dying woman and five others nursing their offspring. Sleeping accommodation consisted of a raised platform fifteen feet long.

This was dense with women and children. We caused a space six feet long to be marked off, and the Chinese put up an old door to divide us from the sick woman, who groaned incessantly. There was a den at one end of the house wherein cooking took place. The chimney from the fire ran under the platform, as in Korean houses, and kept it warm. Our bed for the night, therefore, served for sleeping and drying our wet clothes. It was a new experience, stripping off our sodden clothing before so many staring, interested eyes, but we felt that delicacy would be unseasonable, and certainly unwelcome, for the least we could do for our unwilling hosts was to satisfy as much as possible of their curiosity about our personal economy. We were the first white men they had ever seen, though Ingwa (English) was an expression they all knew, and which appeared to explain to them any eccentricity of which we might be guilty.

We managed a little plain cooking, and then lay down to rest, smoke, and review things. Meantime the Chinese prepared their supper of millet meal, which they ate after dipping spoonfuls of it into something high—rotten fish, we supposed. At first my couch was delightfully comforting, but its warmth gradually became unpleasant and finally disagreeable. So I put the fire out, and hoped the heat would gradually die away and leave me to sleep unop-

pressed. But campaigning forces the necessities of others upon one. In the middle of the night a modest voice awoke us; it said the speaker was one of a party of Japanese soldiers, drenched to the skin, who had just arrived in a starving condition, having eaten nothing since morning. Might they use our fireplace to cook their rice? It was impossible to say them nay, and soon I was turning from side to side in the torment of slow roasting. The soldiers, cheered by the warmth, waxed merry, and piled up the Chinaman's firewood until a great blaze illuminated the kitchen, and the shadows flickered upon the walls of the room in which slept heathen and Christian in close proximity. I watched the shadows and listened to the grunts of the sleeping men, the sighs of the women, the occasional squawks of the children, and the moaning of the sick woman, and thought perhaps it were better to vegetate in London than see life in the East. But only for a moment. I got up and joined the soldiers, gave them cigarettes, and watched them communicating with the Chinese belonging to the house, who had also arisen to guard their chattels. Words were of no avail between them, but a little stick scraped along the mud floor revealed to each other the intricacies of their respective minds. Many of the characters used by the Japanese are copied from the Chinese, so, though the sound represented is

quite different, the meaning conveyed is the same. Whether the conversation was concrete or abstract I know not, but I know that mutual comprehension existed, and that the Chinese brought what the soldiers wanted; whereas I had toiled infinitely before I could bring them to understand that I wanted only hot water. Actually I had to boil it myself before they understood, and then they understood with every wrinkle on their faces, every muscle in mouth, eyes, and forehead. A Chinaman fairly beams with intelligence when he understands. But up to that point he is a graven image for stupidity. I furnished the soldiers with tea and helped them to drink it. The Chinese for tea—"Cha"—is the same as the world-wide-known Hindustanee word, but the Chinese pronunciation is rather different from that in India. I can best convey the proper way of enunciating it by stating that if the mouth be filled with soup, the word pronounced, and the lips closed before any of the soup has run out, an average Chinaman would understand what you meant. But the rice cooked and eaten, my Japanese friends longed for sleep, and as the fire was now allowed to go out, I, too, retired, hoping my only discomfort would be the still warm platform.

Before concluding my account of the day's doings, it is necessary to refer to the movements of the Guards and 12th Divisions on left and right re-

spectively. During the morning the Guards, some miles to the south, had maintained a tremendous artillery duel with the force in opposition. Despite full use of the ten batteries at its disposal, no permanent impression could be made upon the Russian defence. General Kuroki, who held a brigade in reserve, ready to succour the totally committed 2nd Division in case of need, now diverted this force to assist the Guards, all danger of a counter attack upon General Nishi having passed. Prior to the arrival of reinforcements the Guards' infantry had succeeded in breaking the enemy's line. But the Russians being strengthened from the rear the position of the attackers became perilous. The arrival of the brigade altered the situation, and the Guards were now capable of holding the vantage they had gained, though unable to push further. The storm which interfered with the 2nd Division in another part of the field now burst over the Guards and compelled a cessation of hostilities.

Meantime the Twelfth, eight or ten miles north of our centre, had attacked the enemy's left at dawn. Their first move was upon the Russian outlying position at Hampaling, and proved highly successful, the enemy being compelled to fall back upon their main line of defence. A brigade, operating upon the extreme flank at Hwantsuling, forced the Russians to contract their line. At a point a few miles east of

Amping they then made a determined stand in a position which defied the Japanese efforts at capture during the 26th.

Summing up the two preliminary days of the combined attack, it will be seen that the centre was wholly successful whilst the right and left were only partially so. The plan of forcing a wedge into the long line of Russian defence had proved just as effective as the surrounding tactics which, hitherto, had been mainly responsible for Japanese victories. Although our right and left were still held by the enemy, it was inevitable that defeat in the centre would influence the Russian flanks, and bring about a general retirement. The great feature of the movement so far had been the magnitude of the night attack. The launching of a whole division into darkness is contrary to military orthodoxy, yet complete success attended the stroke. It would have been a hazardous enterprise for a European army, but to the Japanese, who excel in laborious preparation, it was a legitimate expedient. It is evident that the Japanese, whilst closely studying Western methods, are entirely untrammelled by them when they see an opportunity of applying their own particular phase of military genius to given circumstances.

CHAPTER XVIII

A DESPERATE NIGHT ATTACK

THE 27th dawned upon a thick white fog, which effectually stopped operations so far as my division was concerned. News having arrived that on the previous evening the other armies had pushed along the railway to a point in advance of the First Army, it was imperative that Kuroki should press forward if he was to occupy his allotted place in the attack on Laoyung. The 12th Division, therefore, had been ordered to attack by night the position they were unable to capture during the day. The superiority in range and position of the enemy's artillery had been responsible for their difficulties hitherto. An attack in the night obviated this disadvantage.

The Russians held a high and precipitous ridge, which gave no opportunity for a turning movement. There was nothing for it but a frontal attack. So soon as the moon had disappeared the infantry moved forward in deep darkness and advanced up

the slopes that led to the Russian position. The way lay over stony inclines covered with thick undergrowth, which tore the clothes of the soldiers, but muffled their feet and enabled them to get close to the ridge without discovery. The foot of the ridge gained, however, the undergrowth ended, and there lay before them a precipitous climb over rocks and boulders. The scrambling amongst stones soon betrayed the Japanese to the enemy, who were prepared for attack. The Russians could not make use of their rifles owing to the darkness and the steepness of the descent before them. Their preparations consisted of large heaps of boulders piled close to the edge of the ridge.

No sooner was the presence of the Japanese disclosed than the Russian infantry began to roll their boulders down the declivity. The great stones began slowly, but, gradually gathering momentum, they leaped from point to point with ever-increasing bounds until they plunged into the toiling Japanese with disastrous effect. Such an avalanche might well daunt the bravest. Japanese infantry, however, know nothing of danger when their orders are definite. Sometimes a great stone would smash on a rock and the broken pieces, like a discharge of shrapnel, would sweep the Japanese ranks, killing and maiming. Yet they continued to climb, uttering no sound, nor firing any shot. There was no noise save the crashing and

crunching of hurtling rock, and the occasional horrid thud of stone upon yielding flesh.

But the Japanese were not to be dismayed, and the greatly thinned ranks gradually neared the top. They paused for a moment to fix bayonets, and, after one more fierce scramble upward, hurled themselves upon the Russians. A furious *mêlée* took place on the top of the ridge, during which the second and third lines of the attacking party, unopposed, were swarming upward to join their comrades, who held but a precarious footing above. The reinforcements arrived just in time, for the men of the first line, reduced in number and greatly exhausted, were being borne back. The new-comers dashed into the fight with loud shouts. Both sides used bayonets only, officers their swords and revolvers. The fight raged for some time, the Japanese being continually reinforced, when the enemy gave way and fled down the further side of the ridge.

The Japanese now employed the enemy's own weapon with deadly effect. They tore stones and rocks from the hillside and sent them flying down upon the retreating Russians. When stones gave out they swept the slopes beneath with rifle fire. It was a weird scene. The night was dark, the stars above alone serving to show the dim forms of towering mountains and lofty crags. Along the ridge there came and went, like the twinkling of lightning,

the livid flashes of many rifles. The Japanese, drunken with exultation, shouted their war-cry without cessation, speeding every boulder and every volley with yells of savage glee. Cruel they were, for cruelly they had been used. Four hundred mangled comrades lay amongst the rocks below, the lives of the majority literally crushed out of them, the remainder wounded and broken beyond healing. It was a reversion to primal instinct. Their brothers had been squashed on the hillside as one squashes flies on a window pane. They knew no mercy, they wanted blood for blood, a life for every life, a maimed Russian for every stricken countryman.

The Russians left seven guns upon the ridge. In the darkness they could not be removed. Indeed they thought their position impregnable, and, though ready for attack, they were unprepared for defeat. The lost position was invaluable. Its capture meant the breaking of an important link in the chain of positions guarding Laoyung. A desperate effort was made to recover the ridge. The Russians gallantly attacked the slope they had so recently descended. But the Japanese were invincible, and rained stone and lead upon them in such quantities as mortal troops could not face. Yet again they tried, and again failed, leaving the slopes covered with dead and wounded.

The victory attained, the Twelfth rested awhile pre-

paratory to marching upon Amping, their movement upon which will be referred to later in this chapter.

I now return to the Chinese village where I had spent the night. The rain had ceased, but there was left the mist that is the inveterate foe of military operations. Under cover of a fog it is possible to do some things, but hardly to advance into a country where the enemy exists in superior force. So no movement took place that morning. I contented myself with strolling about and seeing the wounded. A Japanese officer, who spoke English, told me of his share in the fighting. The commander of the regiment was killed, himself and the other two battalion commanders had been wounded. His battalion alone had lost 150 men, whilst our division lost 640 altogether. Of these there were 400 wounded in the village. Many of them were injuries from sword-cuts and bayonet-thrusts, incurred in the early morning fighting of the previous day. I saw some Russian wounded, but could not find any that spoke English. They looked very dirty, worn, and unshaven, and pathetically unhappy. Several were of a Jewish type of face, and perhaps these were not so sorry to be captured. Seeing a heavy smoke ascending a little way out of the village, I went to ascertain the cause, and found the Japanese burning their dead. In one fire was the commander of the regiment already mentioned. His own men were

WOUNDED RUSSIAN PRISONERS

doing the cremating, and though there had been no ceremony, it was evident that the occasion was regarded as a solemn one.

By one o'clock the mist showed a tendency to clear, and we received orders to prepare to start. By 1.30 we were on the way down the valley. Turning left we ascended the ravine facing the Russian position, which we had watched throughout the previous day. Presently we began to climb, and now we realised how severe had been the task of the Japanese infantry. So steep was the ascent that we were frequently compelled to dismount and coax or beat our horses ere they would face the more difficult places. By the path we followed lay little heaps of Russian dead that had been collected on the hillside during the night, whilst wounded of both sides were being borne past us continually. Ammunition pack-ponies were toiling upon the breakneck gradient, and troops of all kinds were trailing up, the men panting with exertion. At last we stood in the Russian position. The ground was strewn with bloody garments and forsaken accoutrements. Mounds here and there showed where the dead were buried, and if any doubt existed as to the nature of these heaps of earth, arms and legs sticking out settled it conclusively.

The scene on the ridge was one of great interest. All around was an ocean of mist in which the dim

forms of rising hills came and went. Nothing could be seen of the valleys below. It seemed as if one stood upon an island that floated high above earth, slowly drifting towards some unknown shore that threatened danger.

On my left a mountain battery was in action ready to open fire. Masses of infantry were standing amongst the Russian trenches curiously examining the débris of yesterday's fight. In the valleys below was our front line cautiously advancing and occasionally firing at objects we could not see. A movement of the fog showed our three batteries in position on a plateau a mile distant, also waiting on the weather. About three o'clock the mist began to clear, and then the batteries on the right opened fire into the distant valleys. Hoarse words of command called the reserves to attention, and they slowly filed away over the ridge and down into the mist below. The mountain guns were taken to pieces and loaded upon the horses, which presently followed the reserves in a long string, the guns and the fittings clanking noisily on the iron pack-saddles as the patient animals swayed and slid down the steep descent into the obscurity below. But the mist had cleared from the hilltops, and here and there from the valleys, clinging chiefly to the narrow ravines that cut up the hillsides. Gradually the region to the west was being swept by a fresh breeze.

Then, suddenly, a gust of wind caught up the blanket of mist and tossed it aside, displaying a picture that riveted the eyes. Far away, vignetted between the shoulders of two mountains, lay a great valley traversed by a ribbon of blue water; a mosaic of fields, yellow and gold and green, formed the centre, rocks and hills and mountains the exterior.

From each valley on the nearer side of the river streamed long columns of infantry, artillery, cavalry, and baggage wagons. All were converging upon one point—a narrow bridge that spanned the rapid Tang Ho. In front of the bridge was a black mass of troops waiting to cross. The bridge itself was covered with moving figures, and beyond stretched an enormous serpentine line which, emanating from the crowded bridge, trailed west and disappeared in the hills that screened the plain of Laoyung. On the other side of the river stood a city of glistening white tents that was fast disappearing before the feverish efforts of a host of ant-like figures. It was a scene worthy of any of the great wars of last century—the horse, foot, and artillery of an Army Corps in full retreat.

No sooner had this spectacle been spread out before us than our artillery and infantry began to awake the echoes with fire. Our field guns on the hill to our right shelled the valley in front, in the further end of which lay the big village of Amping. Here the

enemy had a strong force posted to protect the retirement from a sudden descent by their antagonists. Our infantry pressed forward until held by rifle and gun fire which it was impossible to withstand. Yet we threatened the Russians to such an extent that to expedite the crossing of the river, large bodies of them began fording. The stream is deep and rapid, and more than one figure was swept off his feet and floated downward ere rescued. Presently two batteries galloped along the bank on our side of the river, evidently relieved from the duty of covering a section of the rear. They crossed the river and immediately took up a position in a millet field on the other side of the bridge. Before it seemed possible they could be ready, the guns commenced to spout the livid white flames that catch the eye long ere the noise of the report reaches the ear. We were keen to note the reason of this sudden activity at so great a distance. Soon it was explained. On the far right the 12th Division was now in position, and hotly pressing the retiring enemy from the north-west. Their artillery boomed incessantly in a distant valley that debouched upon the banks of the Tang Ho. The sound of their rifles was lost amongst the hilltops, though we knew their infantry was hard at it. Floating above the valley in which they were operating appeared the white clouds of bursting shrapnel, so dainty in appearance, so cruel in intent. The opposing infantry

was evidently in close contact, for both Russian and Japanese shell were bursting together and filling the sky with white smoke.

Meanwhile the column retiring from the Amping valley turned the corner, leaving only a rearguard covered from the fire of the artillery on our immediate right. The guns, being now without a mark, were limbered up and cautiously brought down the zigzag road that led from their position to the valley below. On reaching level ground we confidently expected to see the drivers whip up and gallop down the road to a position whence the *mêlée* at the bridge might be commanded. The gunner attachés, British and American, were speechless with expectation, and indeed it seemed an opportunity rarer than the dodo. But the Japanese horses do not take kindly to opportunities, and as they are masters of the batteries and not the gunners, we were doomed to disappointment. On reaching the flat the guns crawled with maddening deliberation, and we soon realised that the idea of attack was not even entertained.

Ere long night began to fall, and then darkness blotted out a scene of consuming interest. We descended into the valley and soon caught up the troops that were marching by thousands in the direction of Amping. When close to the river we swung off to the left and followed battalion upon battalion

of infantry down a long gorge which, in the new-born moonlight, looked weird and fantastic. We were traversing a great Russian camping ground, on which the fires were scarce yet cold. Here and there lay broken carts, dead horses, sacks of corn, and heaps of fodder. Gutted villages flanked the road, and timorous Chinamen skulked near, doubtful of trusting themselves too near the locust-like swarm of soldiery which so suddenly had displaced the dreaded Russians.

There is nothing more inspiriting than marching in the midst of an army. The tramp of many feet, the laughing and talking in the ranks, the mingling of horse and foot, the rattle of wheels, the keen sense of comradeship that is aroused by many men moving to a common impulse, are things once heard and felt can never be effaced from the mind. Following the Japanese army these feelings are not awakened as they are when marching with the troops of Western nations. With our own armies every man is a comrade, a fellow-being with whom converse and the exchange of ideas or sympathy is possible. Tommy Atkins laughs loudly, bursts into song, and shouts at his neighbour when the spirit moves him, as it frequently does. His cheerfulness is irrepressible, his disposition breezy, his conversation racy.

Here no voice interrupted the steady sound of

countless shambling feet, no laughter thrilled the sympathies, no song stirred the emotions. The Japanese take their campaigning sadly, their enthusiasm is hidden under impenetrable stolidity, and it is difficult to understand that they are men imbued with a patriotism as intense as any the world has ever known. But even their extreme undemonstrativeness cannot quell the thrill of conscious life that is awakened by the sight and sound of marching soldiery. The few of us from the West were tingling to the feeling, and recollections of night marches over rolling veldt, or of toil amidst Himalayan mountains, quickened the pulse. It was of a piece that we supped on biscuit and slept on Mother Earth, pillowed by a saddle and warmed by a horse blanket. On so glorious a night, in this deep valley lit and shadowed by the moon, with camp fires redly glowing here and there, and horses contentedly munching all around, who could envy the town-dweller and his walled-in couch?

CHAPTER XIX

THE CAPTURE OF THE TANG HO

AT break of day we were mounted and marching into the end of the gorge that we had entered the previous evening. The hillsides closing upon the line of march narrowed the way and forced a gradual ascent up the bed of a mountain stream. Roads had long since disappeared. In due time the steep slope was overcome, and we found ourselves standing upon a knife-like ridge facing the Tang Ho. General Nishi's staff was taking up a position on a low hill near by. I craved permission, which was vouchsafed, together with a warning to keep hidden, as the enemy's guns were believed to be directly opposite, to post myself on a lofty peak that terminated in a spur running from our ridge toward the river bank. For an hour I toiled up and down rocky slopes, climbed precipices, and laboured amidst virgin undergrowth in valleys. But at last I gained my point, and found a reward for all my expenditure of breath, energy, and temper.

Half a mile in front lay the Tang Ho, a band of

turquoise upon a yellow sandy bed. On the right lay Amping and the stretch of river seen the previous afternoon. There were the mouths of the valleys from which the Russians retreated. The roads they took scarred the plain in lines converging upon one great dark space upon the river bank. On the other side of the bank was such another space of trampled ground. Yesterday there had been a bridge. To-day there was nothing but blue water and blackened stumps between the points of crossing. On my left the river ran south-west for a few miles until it crossed a plain. Here stood cavalry, artillery, and infantry in great numbers, continually being augmented from one side of the river, and continually being depleted by departures along a road that disappeared northward into the hills. These were the forces retiring on the Mandarin Road before the advance of the Guards Division.

Turning my eyes to the scene immediately before me, I saw a country rising from the river bed in terraces until, miles in the rear, the horizon was formed by a high broken range of mountains that traced a zigzag line against the blue sky.

Splitting the succession of ridges, at right angles, was a shallow valley, running up from the river and ending in a ravine that lost itself in the distant hills. Fronting the river on either side of the valley were bold precipices rising from the river bed. Carefully

scanning them, I soon detected the tell-tale trenches overlooking their edges. The glasses revealed moving heads dotting every trench. Beyond was a long grassy ridge, stretching on either side of the intersecting valley. Here and there its slopes were furrowed with trenches, whilst all along its length could be seen watching figures. Close examination of the valley proved it alive with Russians. At its entrance lay the village of Souchiatzai, whereof each house was shaded by tall trees and adorned by a garden of richly coloured flowers. Two miles up the valley was a busy camp, and marching downward from it a regiment of cavalry. In a field stood a number of horses and a row of caissons. Near by, a knoll, significantly marked, betrayed the position of a battery. A clump of trees held a mass of lounging infantry.

Dropping my eyes, I scanned my own side of the river. The valley on my left was full of transport, and on the near side of a bluff were congregated the horses of the mountain battery. The guns crowned the eminence, and the gunners crouched behind them in eager attitudes, like dogs in leash. In the gow-liang, near the river, was posted the infantry, waiting to dash across. Towards Amping was a low hill, behind which our three batteries of field guns were ranged. From my point of vantage I was distant about a mile from the nearest Russian trench, and

so high that I could overlook every movement of both sides. In this I had a great advantage over the artillery on my left, which was barely one hundred feet above the level, whilst my hill was six hundred feet high. It would have paid the Japanese to have had a signaller beside us to direct the fire. So happily placed, then, I awaited the opening of a fight where the opposing forces were as distinct as the players on a stage.

Hostilities were opened in startling fashion. Watching the movement in the valley below, three hundred yards to our left, there suddenly intervened three shrapnel clouds. Instantly three loud detonations burst on the ear, and showers of shrapnel sang viciously through the air. There was a hurried scattering of men and horses, and a new assorting of positions in the valley. The reverse side of walls, the inner slopes of every knoll, and the hollows of watercourses were sought in protection by compact little crowds that closely hugged cover. The Russian guns had viewed the straggling lines of baggage animals filing down the valley, and opened a brisk fire upon them. The somewhat forgotten injunction to us by the staff, to keep out of view, was virtuously recollected and acted upon with agility.

Our artillery was not slow to reply, and, locating the enemy's battery at once, directed blast after blast of withering shrapnel against the eminence where

the Russians, plainly visible, were busily working their guns. Attacked, the Russians ceased firing into the valley, and commenced to look for the assailing guns. Their shells burst here, and there, and everywhere but in the right place. Much as there is lacking in the Japanese artillery, it can never be said that the officers do not understand the selection and concealment of positions. The enemy vainly endeavoured to locate our battery, being themselves, meantime, subjected to continuous fire from the six Japanese guns. In the Russian accounts of the artillery fighting at the Yalu, an officer boasted that his men stood to their guns as if on parade. In action the Japanese gunners crouch about their guns like monkeys, and never show nose above earthwork, save when imperative. Presumably Russian officers will learn some day that parade methods in action entail murder of the men and suicide to themselves.

The Russian guns, superior in number, in calibre, in weight of shell, and in range, were quickly silenced by our little mountain battery, which thereupon turned its attention to the long trench that overlooked the river from the top of the opposite cliff. The first shell, well directed, caused a commotion among the heads and shoulders, which tucked themselves in more tightly. The second shell proved, I suppose, the cover insufficient, for a whole company sprang up and ran like hares into the shallow hollow

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in rear, where a field of mealies swallowed them up. This movement was not clearly visible to the battery, but it caused considerable astonishment to the attachés and journalists on my hill. The battery continued firing, and almost immediately after the first company had gone, the remainder of the line, like one man, rose up and fled into the mealies, leaving the battery to waste ammunition on an empty trench.

We estimated the force in the mealies at a battalion, and presumed they meant to stay there and return to the trench when necessity arose. But no; the white linen coats began emerging from the further side of the mealie field and running up a ravine which led nowhere so far as we could see. In the ravine a halt was called, and when the first company was complete, there was a general massed movement upward. The next terrace stood some hundreds of feet higher and presented a smooth, unbroken front of great steepness, on which there was no vestige of cover. Up this exposed ascent the company began to climb laboriously, bound for the shelter of the ridge above. A madder thing could scarcely be conceived. The men lumped together, and clearly defined against the dark-green hillside, were about to run the gauntlet of guns stationed 2,000 yards distant. Meanwhile the remainder of the battalion was streaming into the ravine and, in small parties, commencing the ascent. Order had

been thrown overboard, and the best runners were in front.

We watched this performance with keen interest, waiting for the moment when the battery would catch sight of the Russians toiling slowly upward. At last they came into view; the guns below roared out afresh and white clouds appeared amid the climbers. They dispersed wildly, scrambling hither and thither to escape the cruel leaden hail. Several figures dropped, but were helped by the others. Some lay still. The remainder of the battalion continued climbing and were soon exposed to the guns. The hillside was now covered with linen coats, moving upward in frantic haste, stumbling and scrambling over the rocks and coarse vegetation. Common sense told them, in emergency, what their drill-book does not emphasise—the value of extension under fire.

The Russian battery now located our artillery and speedily gained the upper hand, compelling our gunners to take shelter. The toiling climbers were then left to scramble to safety without further molestation. They left only three dead, so far as I could see, but others might have been hid by rocks. Many wounded were carried away, to the honour of those who helped at so trying a moment. Presently the Russian doctors and stretcher-bearers came on the scene, so close that I could see the white bands

on their arms, and commenced their melancholy task. They found several wounded in the trench and picked up others on the slope. The dead were left to the mercy of Mother Earth.

Hardly had the scene enacted on the Russian right come to an end when its counterpart was presented on the left. Whilst examining the slopes to the north-east of our position, two companies of infantry, among whom an officer in white uniform was conspicuous, were observed to emerge from a ravine and march out to the crest of a ridge. From there they boldly advanced down the slope towards the trenches fronting the river. So far they had been hidden by the lie of the land from our guns near Amping. But coming into view they were saluted by a salvo of shrapnel. Ere the reports reached us the formation of both companies was broken and the men were running helter-skelter up the slope they had just descended. Prominent was the white-clad officer, who sped beyond his men in the race for cover. Without a shell being fired upon them the occupants of the trenches now sprang up and chased their comrades. They were lost to sight in a hollow for a few moments. Then they emerged to climb the steep slope under fire of the guns. This time there were eighteen guns employed, and the Russians did not get off so cheaply as on their right a short time before. Stricken figures

thickly dotted the line of retreat. The successive flashes of bursting shrapnel twinkled brilliantly and incessantly against the green slopes, and the roar of the guns rolled remorselessly through the valley.

These were two cruel episodes that almost defy explanation. Foreign attachés around me were indignant at what they openly termed the cowardice of the Russians. But it seemed to me something different. Panic it might have been, but hardly cowardice, for I have seen the Russians show themselves gallant and fearless too often during the last few months to characterise them so severely. The explanation probably exists in the carelessness and inefficiency of the officers, which lie at the root of all the Russian disasters. The positions entrenched were proper ones for the defence of the river. But no care had been taken to build trenches that would afford cover from the artillery fire to which they must be subjected when the Japanese attacked. The trenches were not built with a view to retreat in case of need, nor had the officers troubled to reconnoitre the ground that they were to defend. If they had they would have known that retreat could have been safely effected from both lines of trenches by routes other than those which so fatally exposed the men. When the moment of danger came the officers realised the positions untenable, and ordered a *sauve qui peut*, with the result that

we witnessed a disgraceful and apparently cowardly retreat.

Our guns now carefully searched all the ground facing us preparatory to the crossing of the river. The infantry in the corn below had waked up and was falling into line. Presently they advanced to the edge of the gowliang in four columns, two fronting the Russian left under the guns near Amping, and two facing the enemy's right. Simultaneously they emerged from cover and dashed forward across the river bed in long lines. As they entered the water they were saluted by a storm of fire from the high ridges and from forces concealed in the valley beyond Souchiatzai. The bullets hissed in the water that surged past the legs of the soldiers. The stream was rapid and deep, and covered first knees, then hips, and finally reached the armpits of the men crossing. Rifles were held high in air, no easy task in fast-running water. Many men were swept off their feet to find bottom further down, or be rescued by comrades. A few floated away on the stream without struggling. But the Russians were shooting at long range, and their artillery had limbered up and galloped off at the first sign of an infantry attack. The Japanese, therefore, suffered very little, and in ten minutes were across and swarming up the banks like otters. As they crossed a Chinaman raced along the river front apparently to avoid the

fire from the Russian infantry in a wood some distance up the valley. Suddenly the running figure tumbled into a heap and lay still. Instead of avoiding danger he had run straight into it. The Japanese, streaming out of the water, hurried into the village for cover. The cavalry that, earlier, I had seen leave camp, were in the gowliang beyond, and they now began retiring. In doing so they had to cross an open space which exposed them to the guns. They came out in batches of a dozen, and galloped for cover under a rain of shrapnel. One horseman came down with a crash. The man got up, but the horse struggled vainly to regain his feet. Three cavalrymen came back and tried to raise the stricken animal, but he rose only to fall again. The man then mounted behind a comrade, and was borne out of danger. Several times similar cases occurred, sometimes the man being wounded and having to be carried, whilst the horses galloped away riderless. On these occasions the men would chase the terrified horses and bring them back regardless of risk. In five minutes I saw many things to prove that cowardice is not characteristic of the Russian soldier.

The Japanese infantry now gained the inner side of the village, and the remaining cavalry quitted in a body, galloping hard up the valley under a heavy fire from both guns and rifles. The Russians in the wood by this time had caught sight of our infantry

again, and poured so hot a fire into them that they had to retire upon a nullah on the north side of the valley. Across the valley there then ensued a tremendous fusillade, proving the Russians in great force on the southern slopes. Our columns on the right found little opposition, and were swinging south and west in support of the other two, which were blocked near Souchiatzai. The enemy had thus demonstrated that their line of retreat lay between the ridges running south-west to the cross valley through which ran the Mandarin Road. Until evening the Russians retired with great deliberation, and in the face of only moderately pushed pursuit. In pressing forward, our infantry was without the assistance of guns, and at a disadvantage in following the enemy along a valley prepared for rearguard fighting. Our men were dead tired from the exertions of the past few days, and sadly needed sleep and proper food. The Japanese therefore rested content with the accomplishment of their object, which was the occupation of the left bank of the Tang Ho and the forcing of the enemy's left back upon the outer defences of Laoyung.

It was a horrid scramble back to the horses, but it was accomplished somehow or other. We then trailed down the valley towards the river, the banks of which were marvellously illuminated by blazing camp fires. The stream that seemed so narrow from

a height proved to be 300 or 400 yards in breadth. We found a place to ford where the water came no higher than our horses' bellies. In the moonlight the horses plunged in, and churned the rippling water with their tramping feet. There were corpses floating by—Russian or Japanese we could not see. A dead horse, stranded on a snag, made an obstruction over which the water foamed and rushed loudly. Then we reached the fires on the bank, and passed through them towards a Chinese village behind. There we found a house, out of which the occupiers were willing to go on sight of a coin. They took our nags and fed them, boiled water for ourselves, and generally showed themselves glad to see the Japanese. They were not enamoured of the Russians, and told us harrowing tales of wrong and cruelty, most of which we discredited. So ended still another success for our allies, still another defeat for the soldiers of the Tsar.

CHAPTER XX

MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES

THE capture of the Tang Ho positions had entailed arduous marching, poor feeding, continuous exposure, and little sleep for the soldiers. General Kuroki's troops were greatly fatigued and sadly in need of rest. The 29th of August came as an interlude, for on that day there was no fighting and very little marching. It was, however, a day of supreme importance to Japanese strategy, for it witnessed the final moves prior to the general attack on Laoyung.

On the 29th General Nishi marched northward, parallel with the left bank of the Tang Ho, for about five miles, when our scouts ran into the cavalry of the enemy. We had struck the outposts of the Laoyung defending force. The outposts driven in, we halted for the day in front of the ridge occupied by the Russians, and behind which were the plain and city that had been our objective for so many long months. That night we camped in a Chinese village nestling in a lonely ravine, the lower end of which debouched

upon the broad bosom of the Tang Ho. The little valley was bounded by steep rocky hillsides, that garnered up the sunshine and kept the cold winds of winter from blasting the abundant vegetation. Every square inch of arable land was cultivated by the diligent Chinese. Gardens with flowers and fruit surrounded each cottage. A joyous burn romped down towards the river, and in a limpid pool I washed myself clean of the grime of five days' marching. And no sooner was I clothed and my own man again than I perceived the arrival of my baggage. Ere long I was sitting in the door of my tent drinking the tea of Darjeeling and blessing the day I was born. Yet whilst inhaling the peace and beauty of this sylvan scene the air was reverberating to the boom of distant cannon. Deep sound surged among the hilltops, and the echoes floated downward into the little ravine like scraps of music borne upon a fitful wind. It was the Russian artillery roaring defiance at the three Japanese armies that had closed on Laoyung and were menacing its defences.

With the advent of morning I was toiling up a mountain, from which springs a jagged peak towering head and shoulders over every crest for many miles around. Eager for the view that this rock-crowned eminence would afford I forgot fatigue, and surmounted slope after slope in breathless haste. Scramble after scramble brought me higher and

higher until at last I fell face forward upon the sky-line, and gazed into the north upon a never-to-be-forgotten panorama.

Eight miles distant, a black hazy mass amidst the yellow of ripening corn, lay the city of Laoyung. Its dark and forbidding walls formed an immense parallelogram, the rigid lines of which were relieved at intervals by pagoda-like erections that marked the various gates. Near the north-west corner a lofty tower reared its ornamented head high above the plain, and, just beyond, rows of bright new warehouses gleamed in the sun and indicated the direction of the iron road that links Asia to Europe. West of the railway a great balloon of sheening silk careened in the wind. South-west from the city a noble lion of rock lay couchant on the plain, its crest topped by a flashing, diamond-like heliograph. Through the patterned expanse of growing crops twisted the Taitse, sapphire near at hand, and glistening patches of molten silver in the distance.

In the south this fair prospect was circled by succeeding ranges of hills, upon a peak in the rearmost of which I was posted. Over the inner and the adjoining ranges came and went little white clouds that might have been but detachments from the fleecy masses that floated in the blue sky, were it not for the twinkle that betrayed their warlike origin. These things my eyes saw. My ears told

me that hundreds of deep-voiced cannon belched smoke and fire from the skirting valleys and from the pleasant fields that fronted the city. As yet I could not see horse, foot, or artillery. But within range of sight they lay to the number of nigh half a million men—some busy at their guns, others marching into position, many at their stations. The magnitude, the significance of the issues which this scene suggested, almost paralysed the mind. The concentrated energy of two great races was here collected to contend, the one part against the other, for supremacy. At stake was the destiny of the Orient.

With my binoculars I swept the expanse before me and endeavoured to pick out details of the vast panorama. So far I saw only a great picture that conveyed but a general impression. It was a picture full of life and incident, as the glasses speedily revealed. Flowing northward from behind us was the Tang Ho. On my right front it joined the Taitse. The greater river stretched from east to west towards Laoyung, where it turned sharply and ran to the north, into which it disappeared. The city lay close to its left bank. To the west of the tower and outside the city walls lay the Russian town, the railway station, and the barracks.

The plain south of the city held the rocky eminence known as Soushan, whence flashed the

heliograph. East of Soushan a low ridge crossed the plain running south-east towards me, until it plunged into the mountains, on one of which I lay. The Russian position began at Soushan, and stretched along the ridge until it entered the mountains. Here a mountainous ridge ran from east to west until it reached the Tang Ho. This ridge was the left of the Russian position. The Russian guns were firing from the southern slopes of Soushan, and from the ridge crossing the plain. In this ridge were gaps occupied by fields of maize and millet. In the growing corn were many batteries. Where the line of defence struck the mountains the artillery was posted in positions commanding the debouching valleys. The hills flanking the valleys were scarred by tiers of trenches filled with men. My view enfiladed part of the enemy's line, so that I could see front and rear. Behind the entrenched hills lay multitudes of men. The reverse slopes were covered with parties climbing backward and forward. The line so far ran from Soushan south-east. Here it changed to east, and crossed my front at a distance of barely a mile.

Before me was the ridge which ended on the bank of the Tang Ho. Upon it was a Russian battery. I could count their guns and see their wheels. The gunners lounged about, for the part of Kuroki's army before them was not attacking. Between the tail of

the ridge and the Tang Ho was a strip of plain. Here lay two batteries watching the river bank. In front of them, in a village, a regiment of cavalry was stationed, and beyond that an advance post, composed of a battery and a squadron, kept guard. The Russian line was shaped like a semicircle, one horn resting on Soushan, the other on the Tang Ho.

The Japanese disposition is easily explained. The three armies formed a semicircular line that fitted close to the Russian line. The Second Army, numbering three divisions, having marched from Dalny, was on our left, attacking Soushan and endeavouring to turn the Russian right. The Fourth Army, landed at Takushan, and marching through Suiyen, was in the centre and attacking the ridge in the plain. Kuroki, on the right, faced the Russian left, our Guards in touch and attacking in conjunction with the Fourth Army.

Though Japanese shell was being rained upon the Russian positions, I could see neither man nor gun. The bursting of the enemy's shell, however, clearly indicated their stations. They lay in every of the many valleys which opened from the south upon the Laoyung plain. Not so the Russians. In every direction I could pick them out. Parties of cavalry were cantering about the line. Trains of ammunition wagons crept through the fields toward the batteries. Behind a bluff stood a number of white-hooded

ambulance wagons waiting for their gruesome burdens. Battalion upon battalion of infantry marched here and there, in and out of the tall millet stalks. Near the city were enormous camps, from which stretched columns of troops and transport, moving to the positions in front.

Until the shadow of night began to cover up this momentous scene we watched. All day the firing had been incessant, and the noise so great that the tympanum of the ear became dull and refused, almost, to hear. Only when a momentary pause took place in the cannonade did one become conscious of the contrast between sound and stillness. We could detect no difference in the relative positions of attackers and attacked. The white shrapnel clouds still floated in the evening where they had flecked the sky in the morning. And every Russian gun continued to belch forth flame from the position of the morning. The Japanese had not advanced, nor had the Russians retired. Laoyung was unshaken, and the greatest battle of modern times was at its height.

Ten hours of constant gazing through high-powered binoculars causes eye and head to ache. I was not sorry to respond to a call to hurry, though it seemed like flouting Fortune to turn one's back upon so mighty a battlefield whilst the conflict continued unabated. But Kuroki's flanking move

had begun, and our camp for the night was many miles distant. If I was to witness the dash on the Russian communications, upon the success or failure of which depended the result of Japanese strategy throughout the campaign, I must follow the First Army.

During the day the European spectators had numbered fifteen, attachés and journalists combined. I now found that there were only three of us left—the German and Swedish attachés, and myself. The Japanese officer in attendance on us had escorted the others campward some time before. For us three who had been so engrossed by the proceedings he had left as guide, philosopher, and friend, one Ishido, a cavalryman of rounded face and figure, and crimson riding-breeches. Ishido's eyes sparkled keenly when we girded on our respective equipments. Doubtless he thought of the bellyful of rice that awaited him; anyhow, we believed that he would make an intelligent effort to lead us where lay our desires as well as his own.

Slowly and cautiously we scrambled down the mountain-side, sometimes clinging to the rocks to avoid being swept away by the wind, sometimes standing still to watch the progress of a stone that, started by our moving feet, leaped and leaped into the ravine a thousand feet below. In half an hour we reached the horses, and under the guidance of

Ishido trotted down the valley where we had camped the night before. Arrived on the bank of the Tang Ho we searched for a ford, and after some trouble found the place where the 2nd Division had crossed during the day. Captain Hoffmann bestrode a big Australian charger, Captain Haegert a leggy half-bred Japanese, animals which gave them a great advantage in a deep river. My little Chinese pony, however, breasted the flood as pluckily as if he were a camel, and though gingerly perched on his back with my knees tucked up on his withers, he landed me safely, and moderately dry.

In the middle of the stream we met a batch of Chinamen, stripped to the buff, and carrying their clothes on their heads. The absence of bridges troubles them little, and it does not detract from the pleasure they take in fording rivers that they are frequently drowned in the process. Perhaps it is because the same one is never drowned twice that they mind it so little.

Across the Tang Ho we found ourselves on one of those dark lines that led to the bridge which the Russians had used in their retreat across the river three days before. It proved to be a track wide enough for six vehicles to march abreast, and was cut up to an inconceivable degree. Crossing the Russian road we entered the gowliang with the intention of pushing through it and reaching the slopes

that divided the plain from the mountainous country in rear. But the accomplishment of this object was no easy matter, for the gowliang proved to be a regular quagmire. Hoffmann, six-foot-three, and his sixteen-hand horse floundered deeply in the mud, and we tried again and again before we won through.

We were now, as we imagined, not far from the valley where the 2nd Division was halted for the night. Ishido had consulted with some other men in crimson trousers, and also with several grey-bearded wiseacres of a village which we passed. He led the way into the fast falling night with an unconcern that cheered our somewhat drooping spirits. He pointed to a low hill in front, and then indicated with a grunt that our destination was the valley beyond. We congratulated each other, and referred to various matters concerning camp equipage that entered our minds—coffee, roast fowls, curried goat, basins of hot water, clean shirts, and the different makes of camp beds. I had three pieces of butter-scotch in my haversack, a delicacy unknown to my two friends. When they made its acquaintance they immediately asked where Scotland was, for of course they did not notice the Camberwell label, and asked the price of the ticket, and if it was a good place to visit. I invited one to stalk deer, and the other to catch salmon, and both, with their whole families, to celebrate the very next 12th of August with me at

my Castle of Inverness. In return I solemnly promised to shoot polar bears in the north of Sweden, and buck in the Black Forest, on the very first occasion that I visited the Continent.

Thus beguiling the way, we came to a steep hill, at the foot of which Ishido paused—three pairs of eyes keenly watching to see whether in doubt, or if merely to discriminate betwixt two obvious ways of ascending. Hoffmann and Haegert had known Ishido before, and had told me, when I saw him for the first time, that he knew no European language; and I knew they could not speak Japanese. But Ishido, to my eyes, seemed to dwell rather, and the same idea struck both the others, for they began to talk quickly to him in their own languages, and I am not sure that I did not punctuate their remarks with the expressions that come naturally to the tongue of an old soldier. Anyhow, Ishido dropped off his horse and was speedily leading the way up a path where we could only follow in single file. It was a reasonable assumption that from the top of the hill we should see the camp fires of the division glowing in the valley beyond.

But instead of a valley on the other side of the hill there was a lofty mountain range. And now my friends told many things to Ishido which I was glad not to understand, and perhaps Ishido was glad not to understand either. I also spoke a few words to him

more in sorrow than in anger; and from being leader of our little band Ishido became rearguard. Hoffmann, being the possessor of a compass, went ahead, our intention being to make for the lowest part of the mountains in front and to cross over to our camp, which was obviously on the other side.

Slowly and laboriously we climbed upward, our footsteps, for it was too steep to ride, lit by the rays of a feeble moon. It took us an hour to reach the top, and then we looked down into a dark gorge, the bottom of which we could not see. Nevertheless faith was strong within us, and we decided to descend, and eat the supper that must surely be ready. It looked rather steep, but there were marks of horses' feet which encouraged us.

Hoffmann continued to lead, I followed, then came Haegert, and finally Ishido. As we advanced the descent became steeper, and the rough ground ceased and gave way to enormous blocks of stone that lay on the hillside like shingle on a beach. The big Australian was evidently very much at sea and held back and jibbed, whilst Hoffmann Gott-in-Himmelled him from before, and I prodded him with a stick from behind. At one awkward place, after objurgations lasting five minutes, the big horse sprang on to the top of a huge flat rock and slid gracefully down it on all fours, until I lost sight of him under the shadow of a cliff which towered overhead. I nego-

tiated the flat rock by a wide detour, in making which I lost sight of the rest, but was kept aware of their neighbourhood by what they said to their horses in loud tones.

In fact, we were in a nasty place, and it began to look as if further progress were impossible. Then Hoffmann fell down a precipice, which he informed us in broken tones was more than twenty feet high. He warned us not to come further, but Haegert insisted on going to help him, whilst I held Haegert's horse, calculating that my own would remain still. After a quarter of an hour Haegert, Hoffmann, and his horse were beside me again, and I went to look for my own horse, which had broken away and disappeared along the path we had come. It was a very melancholy party that groped its way back to the ridge from which we had descended. After a while I found my horse, with the bridle stripped off his head, and my overcoat torn from the saddle. Two shoes were gone, and his legs were cut and bleeding. The only thing about him that remained good was his appetite, for he continued to search diligently for grass whenever I gave him a chance. When he could not find grass I believe he ate stones, it being one of the peculiarities of the Chinese horse that he has no palate and eats everything small enough to get between his teeth.

For two hours we wandered amidst silent mountain-

tops, stumbling, clambering, crawling. Then we saw a light and discovered a hut, whence issued a tribe of furious dogs, followed by a party of cut-throat Hunghuses. I was indifferent whether it was my fate to be eaten by the dogs, or to be garrotted by the bandits. I certainly would not have disputed for my life, and indeed it was almost disappointing that the sight of the swords, and Ishido's crimson pantaloons, made the Chinese villains keen to be rid of us. They jumped at the opportunity of furnishing a guide, and presently we were following an elderly limb of Satan, who swung a paper lantern on the end of a stick to light the path.

It was a path that nothing less than broad day could light effectually. It struck me that I was glad I had not to travel upon it by day, for there were such fearful precipices upon either side, and such awful glissading down slippery rocks, that I knew my nerve would give way if I could have seen the dangers properly—or perhaps it was that they looked worse in the dark. Anyhow, I discovered that one of my spurs was twisted round my ankle, and the other bent until the rowel scored the inside of my own foot; the heel was gone from one boot, and the sole of the other flapped beneath the upper like the jib of a ship when she puts about.

Even our guide found it difficult travelling, and he soon began to grumble and want to go home.

But the mailèd fist held him, and the sword of Ishido worked in its scabbard. Truly it was a horrible road we took, and almost as severe as the road were the statements made in its condemnation by the others of the party. For several hours I listened to cursing and swearing in German and Chinese, Swedish and Japanese, saying nothing myself, owing to the inadequacy of the English language, yet inwardly corroborating all I heard.

At two in the morning we were crawling along a valley, when we came to a great encampment. Blazing fires stirred by wakeful pickets cast a red glow over phalanxes of recumbent figures. The bayonets on the rows of piled arms flashed and flickered in the leaping light. Horses whinnied a salutation to our tired animals, and a sentry before the hut where the General slept grounded his rifle with a jar that rang harshly through the darkness.

I saw something white under a tree. It was my tent. The others were camped further away, so they went on into the night and left me. I went poking around until I found a mafoo, and, handing him over my horse, I entered my own house and lay down to rest, booted and spurred, too tired even to call for food.

CHAPTER XXI

KUROKI'S FLANK MOVEMENT AT LAOYUNG

AFTER the capture of the Tang Ho positions, our army was disposed as follows :—The Guards Division, on the left, was reinforced by one of the spare brigades, and two battalions from the 2nd Division. The 2nd Division, in the centre, was minus the two battalions lent to the Guards. The 12th Division, on the right, was reinforced by the other of the spare brigades. The three batteries of field artillery, lent to the Guards prior to the capture of the Tang Ho, were now returned, so that each division possessed its proper complement of guns, viz. six batteries of field guns each to the Guards and 2nd Divisions, and six batteries of mountain guns for the Twelfth.

On August 29th the Guards advanced on the west side of the Mandarin Road until their outposts were in touch with the outer line of the Laoyung defences. The 2nd Division made a corresponding move northward between the Mandarin Road and the Tang Ho. The Twelfth remained on the eastern bank of the

Tang Ho, and moved into the apex of the angle formed by the Tang Ho and the Taitse, leaving the spare brigade at Ponchiho, far on the right, to take care of a force of 7,000 or 8,000 Russians threatening our flank from the Mukden Road.

On August 30th the 12th Division made the preliminary move of the flanking operation by which Marshal Oyama designed to cut off the retreat of the enemy, and force them into a decisive battle. Marching eastward throughout the day, the Twelfth reached the Taitse, where it bends to the south near Kankwantung, and crossed by fording the same night. Simultaneously the Second crossed the Tang Ho and took up the position vacated by the Twelfth in the morning, whilst the Guards extended eastward to fill up the front left vacant by the 2nd Division. These movements were effected without opposition from the enemy, who appear to have kept but loose watch on their left flank.

So far, Kuroki's army had merely moved eastward without losing touch with the other armies. But now a most important development took place. On the 31st the 12th Division established themselves in a position near Kwantung, facing west, and about ten miles from the railway. During the day they prepared artillery positions and reconnoitred the country in view of the attack to be made in conjunction with the 2nd Division on the following day.

Meantime the Second was marching to the ford, and on the night of the 31st it also crossed the Taitse, joining forces with the Twelfth. The pioneers of the two divisions then threw a pontoon bridge across the river, by which the artillery was moved over and placed in the positions already prepared.

The flanking move was now complete, and it only needed daylight of September 1st to inaugurate the attack. But Kuroki's army was divided, a division, a brigade, and two battalions remaining west of the Tang Ho, whilst two weak divisions were upon the north bank of the Taitse, completely beyond the reach of succour from the forces investing Laoyung. A gap of fifteen miles of rough country, the Tang Ho, and the Taitse separated Kuroki from the rest of the Japanese army. The Russians had thrown away a succession of chances. On the 31st they had the 12th Division wholly at their mercy, but failed to fire a shot. Up to the night of the 31st Kuroki could have retired into the mountains in rear, if the gap had been broken and his force cut off. But once the artillery and baggage had crossed the river he was entirely committed. The Taitse, swift and deep, could only be forded by infantry, and that only here and there. For the retirement of the artillery, the reserve ammunition, the impedimenta of two divisions, there was available only a single slender bridge, which, in the event of attack by the enemy, must

have proved totally inadequate. To those knowing Kuroki's position it seemed inconceivable that the Russians did not swoop down upon him; and hardly less conceivable that Marshal Oyama should have jeopardised so considerable a proportion of his forces upon an undertaking that lacked the essential elements of success. The Japanese Commander-in-Chief may have been justified by the knowledge that the Russians permit liberties which an enterprising foe would turn to advantage. But he will find it hard to explain why he took a liberty, regardless of consequences, at a point where was the crux of the whole situation.

Across the Taitse from Kankwantung is a high hill surmounted by an old Chinese castle. In the shadow of the ruined masonry General Kuroki and his staff found a point of vantage on the morning of 1st September. Here was a strange contrast. In the fields below thirty-six modern cannon hurled explosive shell, with devastating effect, upon an enemy three miles distant. The air was pulsing to the rattle of small-bore breechloaders. A general, surrounded by a German-trained staff, listened to the reports of his divisional officers through telephones, and transmitted the news of his progress, through a clicking telegraph instrument, to Grand Headquarters, twenty miles distant. The telegraph and telephone wires lay in the grass like snakes. The Chief of

Intelligence surveyed the expanse before him through a telescope that magnified like a microscope.

Upon the science of modern military method there looked down the old crenellated walls. Their pride had been broken long years ago, for what were brave defences in the yesterday of centuries were now but heaps of tumbled stone. This old keep, in past times, defied great armies; to-day it would prove but a trap for an unwary commander. Conquering Manchus garrisoned this castle in days gone by; bowmen and spearmen tramped along its stone-flagged galleries. But to-day a telephone-using general sits on the fallen masonry, and the shriek of high velocity projectiles echoes among the ruined walls.

Under an old bastion I stationed myself, not far distant from the staff, confident that the hard-worked, yet friendly and sympathetic Chief, General Fujii, would find time ere long to enlighten me as to the progress of the many movements which were hidden by the gowliang.

Slightly to the left and flowing due west lay the blue and sparkling Taitse. Straight ahead, beyond a plain of ripening crops, towered a mass of mountains shutting out from view the city and environs of Laoyung. From behind the mountains the railway stretched north-east, right across our front. It was ten miles distant from our point of observation, but long trains drawn by pairs of puffing engines were

clearly visible passing up and down the track. Each truck, each wheel, the firemen on the engines, could be discerned through glasses. To tear up this iron road that seemed so near, and render it impassable to troop or transport trains, was our object. But those ten miles of waving corn held ten times ten thousand Russians, specially devoted to the protection of the precious railway and the numerous flanking roads that afforded means of retreat to a beaten enemy.

At our feet lay the village of Kwantung, and a little to the right of it a wave in the cornfields proclaimed a low ridge breaking the monotony of the level plain. A second glance showed that a deep nullah scored the nearer side of this rising ground. The nullah was crowded with men, horses, and wagons, and its western lip was fringed with cannon. Here were posted the thirty-six guns of the 2nd Division. Right and left of the artillery the infantry was massed, the left resting on the Taitse, the right stretching northward in a long arm that touched hands with the infantry of the 12th Division. The Twelfth continued the line to the low hills near where the collieries were situated. Our front was strung out over no less a distance than six miles, which, if the Russians had been aware of it, would have led to our speedy undoing.

The Russians, to the number of three divisions in the earlier stages of Kuroki's movement, were

centred in the mass of mountains bordering the Taitse, and blocking the view of Laoyung. The nearest point of these mountains was a mound 200 feet high, hereafter called No. 131, that rose from the water's edge and afforded an excellent position for the enemy's guns. In the plain fronting the mountains, and 1,200 yards north-east of No. 131, stood Manjayama, an eminence 150 feet high. It possessed a flat top 500 yards long and 100 broad at its widest part, its circumference at the base measuring perhaps 2,000 yards. This insignificant hillock turned out to be the key to the Russian position, a key of which the Japanese managed to possess themselves by a dashing attack, but which they were unable to turn in the lock for want of strength. In the hands of the Russians it dominated the line of advance upon the railway; in Japanese hands it constituted a direct menace to that railway. For four days the fighting upon and around Manjayama was of the fiercest description, the strife for its possession costing nearly 15,000 men. It is difficult to believe that the history of war records any other struggle so desperate and so protracted as that which I must endeavour, however feebly, to describe.

From early morning the Japanese guns methodically bombarded Manjayama and the neighbouring fields, where lurked unseen the Russian infantry. Meanwhile, our men were pushing forward in parties

that plunged into the gowliang, and were lost to sight. On the Russian side I could pick out small bodies of men moving hither and thither in and out of the patches of tall maize and millet. Rifle shots cracked out now and then, and occasionally would come the grunt of a volley. Gradually the massed infantry before me lessened in number, only to appear further on at some new point nearer the enemy. Presently two batteries limbered up and crawled along the road that disappeared into the yellow corn. Half an hour afterwards they came into action at the edge of a field, where their movements were hidden from the enemy by the wall of tall stalks. Then the rifle fire increased, and the Russian advanced parties were seen falling back before the slow encroachment of the Japanese infantry.

Whilst these preliminary movements were taking place the enemy's artillery was busy. From positions which we could not at the time determine they subjected our guns to a heavy and regular shrapnel fire. Eight of their guns firing in quick succession gave us a pretty exhibition of gunnery. In the translucent air above our artillery position would suddenly appear a white puff and a dart of flame. Then as one says one, two, three, the others would come, until all eight little tufts of white fleece appeared in a row in the blue sky, floating slowly down the wind like swans upon a river. Next the eight noisy bangs

of the exploding shell struck harshly on the ear, then came the eight sustained screams from the speeding bullets, and finally the deep, accumulating booming of the guns themselves. I kept my eyes glued upon the Japanese gunners, watching for the effect of the scythe-like shrapnel. But those manning their pieces worked like machines, undisturbed by the tornado of lead that swept the air above; I saw no man falter. But a train of pack-ponies was threading its way along a path in the crops towards a shady clump of trees standing in rear of the guns. The animals bunched comfortably in shelter, only to scatter like frightened sheep as a blast of shrill-voiced bullets swept overhead. Two fell, one to lie still, the other to kick and vainly struggle to regain its feet.

Thus indicated, it became possible to trace the effect of the Russian fire. The shells appeared to burst directly over our guns, and the shrapnel to strike the ground some hundreds of yards in rear, close to the clump of trees. Every now and again a quick shiver would run along the gowliang telling of swishing lead. Sometimes from the grass under the trees would jump up a long, snake-like cloud of yellow dust, marking a spot where the contents of a shell switched the earth. The Russian shell continued to burst in the same place, dealing death and destruction, not to the Japanese, but to the insects that crawled in the fields in rear.

The Russians fired in the course of the day shells estimated at between 1,000 and 2,000 in number, at a position where men and guns were plainly visible. Yet the Japanese casualties amounted to one man killed and seven wounded. Some days later, when visiting the Russian gun positions, I discovered the reason of such indifferent shooting. Looked at from the Russian side, the clump of trees appeared to grow upon the ridge where our guns were. As a matter of fact, the trees were a full four hundred yards behind the ridge. The Russians evidently took their range from the trees, with the result recorded. Somehow one feels certain that the Japanese would not have erred to such a ridiculous extent.

No less interesting was the effect of our own artillery fire. I followed it carefully at one period in the morning when Manjayama was heavily bombarded. The slopes of the little hill were lined with trenches full of men. These, from their elevation, were a menace to our infantry advancing from cover to cover in the plain below, and their suppression became necessary. The near side of Manjayama was a gently sloping grassy plateau which made a fine mark for common shell. One by one the shell dropped upon the plateau, raising clouds of yellow dust and emitting dense masses of black smoke as they burst. Each shell made a deep brown

hole in the green slope, and soon the ground was dotted like a pepperpot. Meanwhile the Russian infantry were running. As usual, their trenches were not of the sort to protect them from artillery fire. They started out of the trenches in batches and made frantic dashes for the further side of the hill. Frequently they miscalculated the proper moment, or rather the Japanese gunners were too cunning for them. A shell would burst and scatter; then out came the Russians, hoping to get away before the next came. But when the Japanese tumbled to this procedure they fired a single shell, and a salvo a few seconds after. One shell dropped right amongst a bunch of five men. When the smoke cleared I saw four figures lying prone, and one sitting up, apparently unable to move. Then, as I looked came a runner, who took the wounded man on his back and slowly bore him away. But another shell came, and rescuer and rescued went down, to rise no more. Those wounded whilst the plateau was being shelled were slaughtered as they lay, for it was impossible to remove them; shell bursting all around wounded them repeatedly, until one more merciful than the others quenched the vital spark.

Meanwhile our infantry was pushing through cover and driving the Russians back upon the line of defence containing Manjayama. In the afternoon

they were within striking distance, and the artillery prepared for the assault by a sustained bombardment from all the guns. The enemy's artillery increased their fire upon our gun position, but were unable to do much damage to our infantry, who, roughly entrenching as they advanced, were concealed by the crops. The fire of so many guns has an awesome effect upon the spectator, who feels small and humbled by the terribleness of the sound, and the thought that human life counts as nothing before the relentless hail that is the consequence of each discharge. A rifle bullet is comparatively friendly; it is small and merciful, and has a human eye behind it, not far distant. But shells, coming from miles away, are sped into space irresponsibly to deal death and destruction. They have lost the human attribute, have gone from human control, their mission to maim and kill. For twenty minutes the ground trembled and the air vibrated to the deep-throated bellow of cannon. Then the guns ceased firing, and a silence fell upon the plain.

The Japanese rose out of their temporary trenches and formed up in loose open lines, one behind the other. A muffled order ran along the ranks. The front line stiffened, fixed bayonets without a sound, and started forward stealthily. The remaining lines sank back upon the ground. There was a brief moment of suspense. Then suddenly the air was

rent by a crashing volley, and a thousand voices shouted hoarsely. The Japanese were in the open, fronting the Russian position. The enemy had hastily fired into the line of figures that showed abruptly on the edge of the millet field facing them.

The Russians had cleared a space of some hundreds of yards in front of their trenches. The twelve-foot millet stalks had been broken twenty inches from the ground and then pressed over, one across the other, until they formed an obstruction as formidable as any wire entanglement. Upon the edge of this prepared space the Japanese found themselves when they had passed through the cover. Their answer to the Russian volley was a shout of defiance as they dashed headlong into the open, across which they could see thousands of Russian eyes behind the spurting rifles. The Russians changed from volley to independent fire that came in tearing gusts and withered up the line of Japanese struggling through the network of broken stalks. The attackers melted away before the hurricane until only half their number was left. Then they wavered, and then they came scrambling back to their comrades, a broken and battered remnant. The second line now sprang up and advanced, with the third line hot on its heels. Again the Russian rifles ripped the air with multitudes of screeching bullets. Again the Japanese dashed into the en-

tangling millet, only to find their brave and willing feet hindered and tripped, their onset stayed by the cunning device. As they struggled forward the greedy bullets took heavy toll, and the nearer they approached the Russian line of fire the faster men fell. It was an impossible attack; again came a scrambling retirement. The Japanese attempt had failed. The Russian line was not to be pierced.

Throughout the day that part of our line occupied by the 12th Division had kept up a steady pressure on the Russians. The mountain guns were busily employed harassing the opposing infantry, ever keeping them on the *qui vive* against a sudden dash towards the railway. As the attack developed and the moment of assault grew nigh the Japanese reserves were thrown into the front line, and firing all along became incessant. There was a double object in this. It was, no doubt, clear to the Russians that the impending Japanese attack must be directed upon Manjayama. But the very obviousness of this made them suspicious, and the activity elsewhere suggested the possibility of other plans. Anyhow they hesitated to reinforce Manjayama at the expense of other portions of their line. The Japanese, therefore, in striking, were not throwing themselves upon a point where the enemy was massed. But the numerical superiority of the Russians enabled them to keep so many men

in their line that they were able to repel, as I have described, the Japanese attack. They feared, however, to follow up the rebuff owing to the tactics of their opponents.

These tactics were intended to induce the Russians to believe that Kuroki had with him a very large force; and they were eminently successful, as I have the best authority for stating that the Russians thought the flanking force numbered six divisions. But, as we know, the situation was very different. Throughout the day Kuroki's staff were in great anxiety, for they found themselves confronted with a greatly superior force, whilst their line of retreat might at any moment be broken by a downpour of rain that would render the Taitse unfordable. They had only one course open—to bluff the Russians. This they did to the fullest extent, employing every available man to act upon a vigorous offensive. What would have happened had the Russians followed up their repulse of the Japanese attack, and discovered the thinness of the line, or if they had tried to force their way through on their own initiative, can only be conjectured. By now it will have dawned upon the reader, as it did slowly on those of us who were watching the operations, that not only had the flanking movement failed, but that from the moment of its inception it was doomed to failure.

The Japanese position was one of jeopardy. They dared not desist for a moment from pressing upon the enemy and keeping up the appearance of being heavily backed. Nor could they lose sight of the fact that they were there for the purpose of striking at the railway, though it is difficult to think that General Kuroki did not realise from the beginning that his task was an impossible one. The repulse of the afternoon was an expensive episode, but it must be repeated lest worse befell. The Japanese prepared to attack at night, a form of fighting in which, as we have seen, they are particularly expert, owing to their remarkable discipline and the laboriousness with which they study conditions beforehand.

Waiting until the moon went down, the Japanese infantry went forward with great caution. Every man in the section of the line facing Manjayama took part in the attack; no reserves were left. In close order they advanced over the broken millet field and found themselves upon a line of pickets instead of the masses of men they had encountered in the afternoon. They swept over the pickets and onward to the trenches at the foot of Manjayama. The hastily aroused Russians were firing wildly at nothing in particular. The Japanese line was broken up in the advance, and separate parties opened fire upon the dimly perceived figures in front, and perhaps on each other in the confusion. The officer

in command had lost touch with his men, and it became necessary to rally the attacking line. In every direction flickering lines of flame showed companies engaged in firing heavily into the darkness. The Japanese commander could not tell which were his own men and which the Russians. It was a dangerous moment; a stroke of genius was needed to turn a *mêlée* into a concentrated attack. The enemy on Manjayama were fast collecting their wits and the advantage of surprise was momentarily decreasing.

Suddenly there rang out, loud and clear, above the noisy fusillade, the Japanese bugle-call, "Cease fire." Instantly every Japanese rifle was silent. In a second the Japanese commander took in the situation, and touch was re-established between the broken links of the attacking line. Then came the brisk call, "Resume firing," followed quickly by the "Charge." Shoulder to shoulder the double line of Japanese pressed up the hill, bayoneting the parties of riflemen that barred their advance. On the top they charged the trenches whence the Russians were fiercely firing into the dark line that never hesitated or faltered. Then ensued an heroic fight in which the Japanese lost heavily, but succeeded in routing the defenders.

Manjayama was gained by a brilliant *coup de main*. Once more the Russians had permitted themselves

to be caught at a disadvantage. Whilst they slept in fancied security, the Japanese were crouching to spring. If the Russians had remained in the positions they had so firmly defended in the afternoon, a successful night attack would have been out of the question. But with characteristic insouciance they contented themselves with a line of pickets that was swept away like chaff before the wind, and afforded no brief respite for the main body to rally.

Manjayama must now be retaken, at whatever cost. Throughout September 2nd the Russians made several fruitless efforts to push home a counter attack. But the possession of Manjayama enabled the Japanese to contract their front and concentrate their infantry upon the eminence. Their artillery was moved forward, whence from different points the guns commanded No. 131, which now formed the enemy's advanced position. A converging cannon and rifle fire nipped in the bud each movement of the Russians, and during the day they found it impossible to close upon Manjayama.

At night, however, they made two desperate attacks, in one of which, by means of hand grenades and an irresistible bayonet charge, they practically annihilated a Japanese battalion. The storming party on this occasion reached the top of the plateau, where an unshaken line of defenders met them with a scathing rifle fire that killed or wounded every man, not one

of the Russians escaping to relate the disaster that had overcome them. On September 3rd the Russians again made strenuous efforts to storm Manjayama, but without success. At night they made still further attacks, which resulted in a scene of dreadful slaughter, but left the Japanese unshaken. On the 4th the Russians contented themselves with holding the Japanese attack, and at night they evacuated No. 131, thereafter falling back towards the railway and joining in the general retirement.

Returning to the general aspect of the situation —on the night of the 31st Kuropatkin, realising the attempt upon his flank, withdrew the 10th Army Corps from Laoyung, and ordered it across the Taitse to support the three divisions already there. The reinforcements arrived during the night of the 1st and joined in all the subsequent attacks on Manjayama. On the morning of the 2nd the Japanese position was hazardous in the extreme, if the Russians had only understood the situation. But on the 2nd the remainder of Kuroki's army came up, the two battalions of the 2nd Division arriving at twelve o'clock, the spare brigade at two, and the Guards at four. The other spare brigade left at Ponchiho had meanwhile fallen upon the threatening Russian detachment and severely defeated it. The brigade then marched to Kwantung, and arrived on the morning of the 3rd, after which Kuroki's

A TRENCH NEAR MANJAYAMA

army was no longer in danger, though it was not strong enough to effect the object for which it had been diverted from the main attack.

On the 5th I went over Manjayama, but found myself unable to make a careful examination of the scene, owing to the horrible sights which met the eye in every direction, and the overwhelming stench that assailed the nostrils. One of our party was so overcome that he vomited, and had to be led away. Dead bodies lay everywhere, swollen and blackened, all rotting in the hot sun. Many were literally torn to pieces by shell explosions, whilst the ground was saturated with blood. The Japanese were busy cremating their own men and burying the Russians, tasks that occupied them for some days.

Throughout the 1st Manjayama had been shelled by the Japanese and subjected to two infantry attacks. On the 2nd and 3rd the Russians had shelled it incessantly and made four night attacks. The top of the hill was scored in the most remarkable manner by both bullets and shell, that had glanced upon it and ricochetted into space. The ground was littered with shell splinters, shrapnel, and rifle bullets. For several days the wounded of both sides could not be attended to owing to the incessant fire. Exposure within certain zones meant instant death, so the medical staff were helpless;

indeed, they found more than they could do in the rear. The sufferings endured during those few days are appalling to contemplate. The infantry in the firing line also went through a time of terrible trial. For days they had nothing to eat but dry rice, and water was unprocurable. All the time they lay close in the trenches, subjected to a continuous nervous strain that put sleep out of the question.

Truly Manjayama was a scene of slaughter calculated to fill the most confirmed jingo with terror and horror of war.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ARTILLERY LESSONS OF THE WAR

A FEATURE of the campaign has been the overwhelmingly important part played by artillery. In every action of any magnitude guns have been employed with notable effect. The qualities of various types of guns and of different kinds of shell, the value of concealment and choice of position and of indirect fire, in fact, the significance of every phase of artillery tactics has been fully tested. Many considerations suggest themselves for remark, but the one that transcends every other is that artillery fire is as essential to modern warfare as rifle fire. There have been frequent illustrations of the potency of guns, both in offence and defence, with General Kuroki's army. At the Yalu the fire of the howitzers pulverised the Russian artillery and rendered the task of the infantry perfectly simple. At Motienling six Japanese guns were mainly responsible for the repulse of the attack on the Pass on July 17th, an attack that, had it been supported by artillery,

might have resulted differently. At Towan the thirteen Japanese batteries overwhelmed the four opposed to them and cleared the way for the infantry. On the right bank of the Tang Ho the Russians made a determined stand against the column wedging its way into their line of defence. When they threatened the Japanese flank, a mountain battery, marched over almost inaccessible country, checked the movement and turned the balance when the issue was in doubt. Two guns from the same battery intervened at a point where the Japanese were blocked, and turned the Russians out of the trenches they were defending so obstinately. Instances might be multiplied indefinitely showing that, whilst infantry must always form the bulk of an army, artillery is as necessary to it as bones are necessary to the human body.

Granting, then, the indispensability of the artillery arm, the question arises, What is required in a gun, and in what direction should efforts be made to perfect this branch of military service? The present war teems with lessons, lessons that have been repeated time after time until they have stereotyped themselves upon the mind. The burden of these lessons is that the biggest possible guns are the best; that the guns that throw the biggest projectile to the furthest distance at the quickest rate are the only guns for an army that is destined to conquer

on the field of battle. There is no limit to the ideal size of gun except that imposed by the difficulties of transportation. The most effective gun, it has been amply demonstrated in Manchuria, is the biggest possible gun compatible with the field artillery degree of mobility.

The Russian field gun is a much heavier piece than the Japanese, throwing a 14½ lb. projectile, as against 11 lb., nearly 1,500 yards further. And though not a true quick-firer, according to latest ideas, it is capable of being fired much more quickly than the Japanese weapon, which has no contrivance for relieving the axle of the strain of the recoil. The drag-shoes on the wheels of the Japanese guns certainly keep the gun remarkably steady under fire, but there is always the necessity to relay it after each discharge. The advantages of a heavier shell and a greater range are self-evident. It has been a common sight to see Japanese gunners sheltering from a storm of shrapnel poured upon them by guns which their own artillery was incapable of reaching with effect. And commoner still to see a Russian battery concentrate a rapid fire upon opposing batteries and silence them by rendering the emplacements a hell in which gunners could not live—a result attained by quicker fire and a greater number of bullets to the shell.

On the subject of the relative merits of the

Japanese and Russian artillery, it is impossible to avoid reference to the limitations imposed upon that of the former by the inadequacy of the draught-power employed. The great weakness of the Japanese army lies in its artillery. Perhaps the lightness of the guns might be counterbalanced, to some extent, by the attainment of greater mobility, by the facility with which they could be galloped hither and thither, or placed at points inaccessible to heavier guns. But most conspicuous of the disadvantages of the Japanese artillery is its hopeless and almost pathetic immobility. More than once have I, in company with gunner officers, eagerly awaited the advent of the field artillery where its presence would instantly alter a situation where every circumstance in the field of battle cried out for the roar of guns and the murderous effect of shrapnel. And whilst we waited there was being enacted on some steep slope a scene painful to reflect upon —a horseless caisson in rear, twelve backing, jibbing, screaming horses hitched to a gun, drivers helpless to apply the strength of the weedy, ill-trained brutes to the task before them. And then the substitution of a company of infantry who, with long ropes, drag the piece over the difficult place. That is no exaggeration; such scenes are frequent with the Japanese artillery.

Just as indispensable as good guns is efficient

gunnery; of that we have had ample demonstration in Manchuria. The superiority of their weapon has given the Russians a tremendous advantage over the Japanese. But the latter held their own, and more, throughout the earlier stages of the campaign, partly owing to numerical superiority, but chiefly because their skill as gunners greatly exceeded that of the Russians. The Japanese proved themselves better range-finders, better shots, more cunning in concealment, more astute in choice of position, and more indefatigable in overcoming engineering difficulties. What would have happened at Laoyung if the belligerents had exchanged guns (and horses and drivers) one can only conjecture. And what will happen when Japan fights again, her batteries properly horsed, her drivers increased in skill, and her gunners handling guns of the latest pattern?

The first duty of artillery is support of infantry. That support can never be given whilst the artillery is harassed by opposing guns. If, then, artillery is to prove an effective arm it must be able to deal with the enemy's artillery, either in support of an infantry attack, or that it may remain free to assist in the repulse of infantry. If the guns of an army are unequal to this duty the infantry will be able neither to make an attack nor to repel one. In fact, upon the relative strength of the artillery engaged, other arms being proportionately represented, must

hinge the result of every battle of the future, as has hinged the result of every big fight in the present war.

These remarks naturally suggest a glance at the condition of the artillery of our own Army, and also at that of our nearest neighbour. France has recently rearmed with a gun which has no superior in the world—save one. A rupture in our present happy relations with the French Government is, indeed, a remote contingency. But for the sake of argument let it be imagined that the armies of Great Britain and France are facing each other on the field of battle. The French forces would be composed of multitudes of trained infantrymen, backed by the splendid gun just mentioned. The British forces would consist of crowds of untrained volunteers, leavened by a few regular soldiers and supported by a gun—well, the gun with which our field artillery is armed at present. Now I am not prepared to say that I do not think a British volunteer as good as any French soldier, but I do defy the most enthusiastic patriot to assert that he would be content to see our Army do battle with pop-guns against cannon. Yet that, after all, is not so very much an exaggeration of the state of affairs. Our gun is immeasurably inferior to the French gun, an inferiority which the experiences of the Russo-Japanese War have shown, conclusively, to be one which

detracts in a dangerous degree from the fighting value of an army.

That the gun with which our artillery is armed at present is little more than a popgun, in comparison with the weapons of other Powers, needs little demonstration. Its effective range is 4,000 yards; the utmost speed with which it can be aimed and fired, even when fitted with the Clarke spade for diminishing recoil, is six rounds per minute. Besides which the rifling of the guns used in South Africa is much worn, a fact that greatly interferes with accurate shooting. The French, German, Russian, Austrian, and Italian guns all throw heavier projectiles—our 15-pounder throws a shell that weighs only 14 lbs. 1 oz. —effective at greater ranges, whilst the artillery of the two first-named is genuinely quick-firing, and that of Russia partially so. If the correctness of the hypothesis is admitted—that a storm of shrapnel is of inestimable value at some psychological moment in an action—then what comparison can there be between the gun firing over twenty rounds per minute* and that firing six? Would anyone suggest that it is proper for our infantry to take the field with single-loading rifles against troops

* The French claim that their gun can be fired, effectively, fifteen times per minute. Lord Roberts stated before the War Commission that he saw our new 18-pounder fired thirty times, in 1 min. 17 secs., with the same degree of accuracy obtainable from the 15-pounder under slow fire.

armed with magazine rifles? Yet it would be tantamount to doing so if we asked our present artillery to face quick-firers.

Let us rearm our artillery with the best gun we can get is the obvious lesson which this war teaches us. And the one gun which is better than the French gun, where is it to be found? There lies the irony of the situation. It is we who have that gun; it actually exists in ones and twos in our own Army to-day, and maybe will exist in the Indian Army in a few years, and perhaps in the British Army when the War Office wakes up, and the Treasury is full of money, and the millennium is upon us.

There is the debated question as to what degree of mobility is desirable in a field gun. Our military authorities have settled that so far as to begin the rearmament of our artillery in India with the new gun, which represents a great advance upon pre-South African ideas. The notion that field artillery should be able to trot and canter from position to position received many knocks in the Boer war, and the new 18-pounder gun represents the principle that a field gun shall be mobile in the same degree as the infantry which it is designed to accompany. This does not mean that the ability of a field battery to make a short dash is entirely destroyed. To keep up with infantry crossing broken country, guns must necessarily be able to move faster than at a walk if

they are to regain ground lost at bad places. But it means that the lightness which enables the present 15-pounder field gun to be drawn at a trot, and on occasion at a canter or the so-called gallop, has been sacrificed to weight. In the new gun we have a weapon that weighs more behind the team than any other field gun in the world, but which throws a heavier projectile to a greater distance at a quicker rate than any other in the world. Doubtless the actual weight of the gun and the heavy fittings for absorbing the recoil will make it somewhat more difficult to handle, but that, in view of the comparative slowness of modern infantry tactics, is a small disadvantage beside the greater effect produced.

Manchurian experiences bear out the correctness of the theories formed in South Africa in respect to the advantage of a slow and powerful gun rather than a mobile and weak one. Whether power and mobility are blended in the most satisfactory degree in the new gun can only be proved in war. The point is that those most capable of judging have agreed upon what is required of a field gun, and have decided upon a gun that meets these requirements. The sooner our Army is provided with this gun the better.

The nation has reason to be thankful that the deliberation which governs our military counsels is in no wise characteristic of the personnel of the

artillery branch of our service. South Africa showed us that our gunners understood their work and could adapt themselves to the work of others as well. I am prepared to back the British gun-crew and gun-team against any in the world, especially after what I have seen in Manchuria. It is a pity that such workmen cannot have a better tool. In Manchuria we have expert artillerists on both sides watching the proceedings. They report voluminously to the War Office, and I have the best of reasons for believing that, in the main, their conclusions coincide with those I have expressed.

Students of guns and gunnery await with great interest the steps that the War Office is surely contemplating in consequence of the recommendations from the front. Our attachés there have had unparalleled opportunities of forming a judgment upon many debatable points in the science of gunnery, and their opinions are bound to influence the military authorities towards immediate action in the direction of rearmament.

CHAPTER XXIII

FAREWELL TO THE ARMY

THE telegraph wire has so many manifest advantages, particularly in connection with newspaper work, that it comes somewhat as a shock to realise that there are moments when one thinks its existence had better never been conceived. Such was my feeling when, camped amid the phalanxes of millet stalks that envelop headquarters of the First Army, there arrived a telegram recalling me to London. Campaigning is a pursuit that takes deep root in one; living under canvas, with the smell of growing things ever in one's nostrils, meeting daily men who hold their lives as naught, yet drink deeply of life, the consciousness of being in the thick of great events is a perpetual joy to the soul, which no personal discomfort, no longing for the fleshpots, can quench. In the silent watches of the night one wakes to wonder if some sudden noise portends a secret movement of the multitude of soldiery camped around, in the grey of early morning one's waking impulse is to strain the ear for the dull resonance of distant can-

nonade. Here, existence, the very air one breathes, is impregnated with the circumstance of war—pomp is absent, but is replaced by a simplicity infinitely more imposing. I had spent six months with Kuroki's army—a spectator of its labours and triumphs, a sharer in the succession of stirring episodes that began upon the banks of the Yalu and ended with the Titanic strife upon the plain of Laoyung.

From such a life one cannot be divorced without a pang. Nelson turned his glass eye on the unwelcome signals; but blindness is of no avail against the written call of the oversea cable. My recall had come, and back I had to go, despite the rumours in the air of mighty Russian movements. It was in a chastened spirit that I presented myself at headquarters to bid farewell to General Kuroki and his staff.

The famous commander occupied a humble Chinese farmhouse showing many signs of Japanese order and taste. The courtyard was neatly trenched against rain, and carefully levelled paths crossed it here and there. Shrubs and flowering plants in earthenware tubs adorned the doorstep, a patterned curtain hung over the entrance. The sentry bows as he brings his rifle to the salute. An aide-de-camp ushers me into a little antechamber, divided off from a larger room by a simple device of screens. Here I met General Fujii, the genial Chief of Staff—the man amongst all others of the Japanese who has won the

GENERAL FUJII, CHIEF OF STAFF

regard of the Europeans attached to the First Army. He is kind enough to regret that the representative of *The Times* is leaving, and hopes I may return in the spring.

From the exchange of personal politenesses, with regard to which the Japanese are as particular in the field as in Tokio, it is an easy step to the discussion of the tremendous events just past. Soon the table is covered with maps, and the General is deep in the arrangement of the contents of a box of matches into battalions, brigades, and divisions representing the forces employed in the attack upon Laoyung. I learnt something of the hopes and fears of the days preceding, and during which the Japanese were operating against the Russian forces, something of the trials and anxieties which the officers responsible for an army must undergo whilst fighting is afoot. For a whole hour General Fujii detailed movements, explained plans, recounted incidents, much of which I have already embodied in my description of Kuroki's share in the Battle of Laoyung.

Since the advance from Fenghwanching the First Army, all told, had consisted of 100,000 men. Supplies for such a number under normal conditions entail enormous transport, an organisation without flaw. But conditions were far from normal, the roads and climatic peculiarities of Manchuria forming obstacles that appear almost insuperable. Yet only

once were the troops stinted. When we were camped behind Motienling it rained for seven days in succession, with the result that every rivulet became a torrent, every river a roaring cataract impassable to man or beast. After three days of rain the slender reserves with the marching army were greatly depleted, and half-rations became a necessity. It was only when the army was practically at the last mouthful that a commissariat train, after a terrible journey, got through from Fenghwanching.

So continuous a deluge has a dire effect upon the roads that wander in and out of the valleys, and up and down the steep passes that cross the mountains. The water from the surcharged hills tears down the slopes in leaping cascades. A road in the heights is always of necessity a deep cutting, the joint result of rushing torrents and man's endeavour to correct the ravages of the rainy season. These cuttings become overflushed drains after a wet day, and the water subsides, leaving them choked with débris, littered with boulders and stones from around which every particle of earth and sand has been clean swept. Then the pioneers must remake the old road, or perhaps make a new one.

Whilst I discussed the campaign with General Fujii, Kuroki came in. His is a remarkable face, different from the usual Japanese type, probably due to the Russian blood reputed to flow in his veins.

He is a man about sixty, looking his age in all respects but one—his eyes. They are brown, and sparkle with intelligence and vitality. Humour and kindliness would be the predominating suggestion of his physiognomy if it were not for the strong chin and lofty forehead. The brain of an army is frequently situated elsewhere than in the head of the commander. But looking at Kuroki one cannot but think that in him is combined the actual as well as the nominal leader of the Yalu army.

I raised the question of a winter campaign. Needless to say both generals told me exactly what are the Japanese prospects and plans—a journalist about to be emancipated from the chains of the censor is a safe and sure repository for secret intentions. Yet I was not left entirely in the dark. It was clear that the delay in the release of the troops besieging Port Arthur was seriously interfering with Japanese schemes for the future. To Mukden was a comparatively easy step were the army disposed to make it, but the advantage to be gained was doubtful, for Mukden was dominated by Tieling, and the occupation of the former would entail a great strain on the Japanese, threatened as they would be from day to day by an enemy based on secure positions in the immediate neighbourhood. Evidently operations against Tieling depended upon the fall of Port Arthur. As for the winter, General Fujii admitted

that the cold weather, with smooth, hard roads and frozen rivers, was the ideal time for the transportation of supplies. On the other hand, the frost-bound ground prevented the digging of field entrenchments, rendered difficult the construction of gun positions. Then the cold made fires and cover a necessity—and were these things possible to a moving army? What would be the effect of a gale of wind, in a temperature below zero, on an army huddled together striving to keep warm throughout a long night? Would not the icy blast freeze the men to death? I gained the impression that serious campaigning in the winter was out of the question, that both armies would be compelled to reserve all their strength to combat the forces of nature. At the most, unopposed movements of small bodies of men would be possible, and, of course, the accumulation of enormous quantities of supplies and ammunition at given points.

At last all my farewells were said and I left camp, having sold the good little nags that had served me so well, and paid off the Koreans and Chinese who had shared my joys and sorrows for nearly six months. On the road to Laoyung, I encountered the Taitse, flowing in a stream four hundred yards wide at five knots an hour, at a point where it was supposed to be fordable. In the centre were three men being hurried down in the current, yelling like

pigs going to market. A donkey was also floating by with a quaintly placid look on its face. It had been wrested from its taskmasters by the rushing waters, and for the first time in its life was enjoying a free ride. The prospect of death by drowning seemed to trouble it but little, for the China donkey is as much a philosopher as its master.

I began to think I must go round by the bridge, when a large family of men and boys reached the bank and prepared to ford the river. They disrobed, and when in a state of nature entered the water, carrying their bundles on their heads. I thought that where a naked Chinaman could go, there a mounted war correspondent might follow.

My pony jibbed somewhat—perhaps he dreaded the possibility of following the donkey. Anyhow I had spurs, and he had to run the risk. The Chinese struck out boldly for fifty yards, then turned downstream amid loud encouragement and direction from crowds of observers on the bank. I waited to see a few carried away, so that I might know where the bad places were. The water was rushing past the pony's belly, and I had much ado to keep my feet dry. Suddenly the shaggy mane in front of me lurched forward and the pony dug his nose into the stream. That caused my feet to get wet; ere long I was quite content to be soaked up to the waist, so long as the damp did not ascend further. I could see

nothing of the pony but his muzzle, but of that there was sufficient sticking above water to emit grunts and protests of a most decided character. I wondered was he thinking of the donkey—horses have such retentive memories.

Standing still was of no use, for the rushing water took the sand from under his feet, and instinct, and the spurs, told him to keep moving. The Chinamen continued down-stream—at least their bundles did, for that was all I could see of them. When they reached a certain point there came a great hullabaloo from the bank. That signified the necessity for a change of direction, and my guides turned their faces Laoyung-ward. Then we met a party crossing towards us. One topheavy-looking bundle consisted of an old Chinese woman astride her son's shoulders—ladies in China all wear trousers, so the position is not difficult of achievement. Like myself, the old lady was wet as regards the legs, but dry in the upper works. The expression of her face was like that of the donkey's, placid and contented. Perhaps the river bottom would have been as welcome as the further bank. The old in China, instead of fearing death, look forward to release from this vale of tears and to a future in the bosom of Confucius.

The city is distant no more than a stone's throw from the river bank, and I was soon skirting the wall in search of a gateway. At the first I came to there

stood a Japanese sentry, who looked doubtfully at me. But supreme unconsciousness is difficult to defeat, especially when it is mounted and the would-be interferer is only five feet high. I got through and found myself in a city whereof every house flew the Japanese flag—it being quite touching to see the unanimity with which the Chinese had accepted the Japanese occupation.

I know two words of Chinese—*Ingwa* and *may-yo*, the latter signifying "have not." Needless to say, *may-yo* is the expression in the mouths of all Chinamen in these times of doubt and insecurity. I wanted to find the Scotch missionary who lived in Laoyung, so as I went along a street I addressed likely-looking wayfarers with the magic word *Ingwa*. It was remarkable that the reply was invariably couched in the only other word that I knew—*may-yo*. It was nothing but *may-yo* for a long time, until at the word the face of one elderly Chinaman wrinkled up like a walnut, and his mouth worked with information. Alas! it had no significance for me, and I know not what true sayings may have been lost to the world in that brief conversation. But the result of it was that my quest was successful, and I found the place I was looking for.

A gabbling heathen made me aware that his master was within. Soon I was sitting in a surgery,

whereof the walls were covered with bottles and books with English names. The floor of polished wood, the armchair upholstered in leather, the handsome writing-table, were slowly dawning on my deadened sensibilities, when I looked out of the window into a beautiful flower garden, and there beheld a white-robed figure. Heavens! what it is to taste the sweets of civilisation, to stand face to face with a trim countrywoman after six months of Korea and Manchuria! I was soon deep in an interesting conversation with Dr. and Mrs. Westwater. They told me of the coming of the armies, which had turned the quiet backwater of their existence into a swirling torrent.

Dr. Westwater represents the medical side of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission. He has been in Laoyung for many years building up a community of believers in Christian charity and goodness, if not of believers in the Christian creed. His influence in Laoyung is unbounded, and when wounded Chinese began to stream into the city from the environs of Laoyung, after the great battle had begun, the magistrate begged him to help. The doctor organised refuges and hospitals, and as the poor folk came in they were provided for.

I went through the hospital, where the doctor that day had performed three amputations. Many men were lying about comfortably bandaged and cheer-

fully smoking. There were a great number of women and children sorely wounded, mostly by shrapnel. I saw one girl of sixteen, as bright and pretty as any English maid, with a wounded foot. The foot demanded amputation, but the poor girl prayed the doctor to spare it, and it was being given another chance. The gift of a cigarette, which she lit at her mother's pipe in the most approved fashion, made the child laugh happily, and we had a pleasant conversation, in which my words *Ingwa* and *may-yo* figured prominently. Going round the women's ward, I observed that they all smoked pipes, even when nourishing their offspring, of which the Chinese woman appears to have great number.

From Laoyung I rode south, passing the redoubts around which the Japanese had spent their strength, past Shoushan, the grey rock that had looked down upon the mighty battle, past the forsaken defences of Anshantien, and so to the ancient city of Haicheng. There, piled up in the railway station, were the bones and dust of 5,000 Japanese soldiers that had been cremated after the fighting, and were now being sent home to Japan; the melancholy relics of devoted men and unquenchable gallantry. Then to Inkow, my little horse covering the distance of ninety miles in thirty hours. On the outskirts of the town I met two countrymen, and rode in with them. They were on fresh horses, and were trotting fast. My pony—the

same that had carried me so bravely in Korea—was very tired, but he pulled himself together, and trotted the other two clean off their legs in the last mile. In a day or two I rubbed his nose and patted his neck for the last time, and then sailed for Japan.

* * * * *

I must not omit to mention that a few days after I left the *Haimun* at Chinampo the Japanese Government put an embargo on her movements, which effectually frustrated our plans for the transmission of intelligence of the operations on land. On sea, however, until the charter was cancelled in July, she continued to do notable journalistic service despite the threats of the Russsians.

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